COMMONSENSE THOUGHT AND WORKING CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS: SOME ASPECTS OF THE GLASGOW AND LIVERPOOL LABOUR MOVEMENTS IN THE EARLY YEARS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

by

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PART III

Introduction

In Part II we outlined the social structures of Glasgow and Liverpool before the First World War. It was argued that whereas Glasgow was a city of skilled workers and their private associations which underwrote a Liberal 'commonsense' the casual and unskilled workers of Liverpool developed a different set of social organisms. In Liverpool, the 'commonsenses' available were of Tory Democracy and Irish Nationalism. The extreme differences in the social structures of Glasgow and Liverpool show how far British society before 1914 was still a 'local' society of great unique conurbations. By contrasting two such cities we attempted to show how far the private associations of the working class of each city were organic to both the city's industrial structure and to the aspirations of the class itself. Further, we tried to demonstrate how the 'commonsense' of a society is organic to its social structure.

In Part 111 we shall argue that the history of the Labour movements in Glasgow and Liverpool is also organic to both the commonsense of the city and to the class situation.

In Chapter Six we examine the different Labour ideologies which develop within the two cities as different strands of the Labour vision. In Glasgow the growth of a left wing ILP tradition is related to the existence of radical Liberal beliefs and traditions, while the right wing Labour ideology in Liverpool is related to the 'commonsense' of Tory Democracy and Irish Nationalism.

We argue in Glasgow the important period for the development of the radical ILP tradition was during the Liberal Government of 1906- 1910, and the important 'event' was the unemployment crisis of 1908. The crisis of 'old' Liberalism under a Liberal Government led in Glasgow not to support for 'New' Liberalism, but to the development of a left wing socialist alternative.

In Liverpool, by contrast, the development of a few strands of Labourism took place under the Conservative Governments before 1906, and the important 'events' are connected with the assimilation, or otherwise, of the Roman Catholic Irish community into the life of the city. Thus the 'commonsense' of the two cities had a decisive impact on the different development of Glasgow and Liverpool's ideology.

The social structure and 'commonsense' of the two cities had a further impact on the predominant organisational forms of the local Labour movements. In Glasgow the ILP developed an existence independent of the Glasgow Trades Council. This remained a 'parliament' of the skilled workers, but increasingly lost its political influence to the Glasgow Federation of the ILP. Thus the Liberal 'separation of powers' was reproduced in Glasgow's Labour movement. In Liverpool, on the other hand, the Trades Council was the shadowy representative of Labour views and was completely overshadowed itself by individual trade union leaders like James Sexton.

Chapter Seven considers the development of the 'revolutionary' strands of the Labour world vision which emerged in Glasgow and Liverpool. The emergence of syndicalism in the midst of the Liverpool Transport Workers Strike is compared with the forms of revolutionary socialism which developed in Glasgow. In Liverpool, syndicalism was extremely atheoretical; it was not organisationally rooted in the local Labour movement and avoided rather than grappled with the Protestant/Catholic divide. It was, however, a tendency that believed in revolution through the direct action of a general strike. In Glasgow, on the other hand, the SLP and BSP were highly theoretical and well rooted in the Labour movement. But unlike Liverpool, neither believed in an insurrectionary road to power: they were <u>evolutionary</u> revolutionaries. We argue that the development of these different tendencies was also related to the different 'commonsense' of the two cities.

In Chapters Six and Seven the beliefs of the different organisations are studied through the propaganda they presented in their newspapers. In this way it is possible to see how they dealt, or did not, with the available commonsense notions of the cities they lived in. We consider their beliefs not only in relation to their attitude to industrial organisation and to the State (the two questions historians have generally asked) but also, following Gramsci's argument about the different levels of class consciousness (put forward in Part 1), in relation to Irish Home Rule and Women's Suffrage.

Chapters Eight and Nine are concerned with how these different strands of the Labour world visions were transformed during the crisis years of 1914-1920. It has often been assumed that experience makes theory but, of course, theory also determines how that experience is interpreted.

Chapter Eight examines the war years of 1914-1918, while Chapter Nine considers 1918-1920. Middlemas argues that 1916-1922 was a watershed in British history, but in both Glasgow and Liverpool, the pre-War beliefs that men held were only just coming under challenge. We argue that both ideologically and organisationally the transformation of the Labour movement only began in the First World War and the immediate post-war crisis. The resolution of this process of transformation, which goes beyond the scope of the present thesis, occurred in the period 1920-1931 in which there was a remaking of British society culminating in a new Modern Conservative hegemony with a new commonsense and dependent on different social organisms - the "natural" social organisms of work and the family, and the neighbourhood.

Chapter 6 Glasgow and Liverpool 1900-1910

In Glasgow, the Boer War revived both the flagging socialist movement and Gladstonian Liberalism. But during the years of Tory Government up to 1906, it was the Liberal revival which gripped the commonsense of working men. Thus the Liberals swept the polls in the municipal elections of 1906 while Labour made only a small impact. It was under the Liberal Government from 1906 that the socialist movement flourished with the printing of Forward, the development of an ILP electoral machine, and the 1908 unemployed demonstrations. A Labour commonsense could only be forged in Glasgow when the liberal commonsense was under challenge.

In Liverpool the situation was reversed. The only Labour gains before the 1911 municpal elections were made under the Tory Government. And these were made alongside Liberal gains. Both before and after 1906 religious sectarianism was strong, but while it led to splits within the Tory Party before 1906, it was expressed in sectarian riots after that date.

Not surprisingly, the socialist ideologies also developed differently. In Glasgow a radical liberalism spawned the most left-wing ILP socialism in Britain. This saw itself as both the real bearer and opponent of the radical values. Throughout this period the Glasgow Trades Council remained an organisation both Lib-Lab trade unions and ILP members could co-exist within, and the former could be brought over to a Labour stand. There was no sharp break between one set of values and the other. An evolutionary view of the transformation of the working man appeared possible (and sensible) and ultimately affected all the socialist sects

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in Glasgow.

In Liverpool, working men still stood as 'Labour representatives' - not as ILP socialists as in Glasgow ; with either Liberal or (implicitly) Irish Nationalist support. The Tory Democracy and Irish Nationalism of Liverpool found their counterparts in a Labour ideology which accommodated itself to British nationalism. The craft trade unionists who sat on the Liverpool Trades Council were isolated from the mass of Liverpool working men and had little influence, especially during 1906-10. But despite this weakness, the Trades Council was the closest to a representative working class organisation that Liverpool possessed.

Glasgow and the socialist upturn

The early gains of labour representation in Glasgow - culminating in the ten 'stalwarts' elected to the City Council in 1898 - were never entirely lost even in 1901. Before 1906 there were established branches of all the major socialist organisation in Glasgow of which the most important were the ILP, the SDF, and the SLP (from 1903). Thus while the Young Scots were trying to reconstruct Glasgow radicalism in the early 1900s, socialist groups existed in which a new layer of working class 'philosophers' and 'good sense' thinkers could be developed.

During the Conservative governments up to 1906, Glasgow socialism grew alongside and out of a 'commonsense' Liberalism that they could not directly confront. (At the height of the revival of Liberal enthusiasm during 1906 the ILP candidates in the 1906 municipal elections suffered a demoralising defeat[1].) But from 1906 that same Liberal 'common-sense' could be appealed to against the acts of the Liberal Government itself. In the period 1906-1910 it is the ILP - the socialist organisation closest to the traditions of Radical Liberalism in Glasgow - that becomes the leading body of Glasgow socialists.

The Independent Labour Party, the Forward, and Municipal Socialism

Of all the socialist groups, the ILP was closest to the available traditions of the Glasgow skilled working men. It was built on both the radical tradition of Glasgow Liberalism and the demand for working class representation. From 1906 it can be seen to have taken over those elements of radical Liberalism which the New Liberalism was abandoning. The ILP also defined itself against some of the old shibboleths of traditional Liberalism, like temperance, and the single tax. The Glasgow ILP began to develop its own brand of left wing municipal socialism,

1. Forward. November 10th 1906.

distinct from, but overlapping with, the state socialism of the national ILP of the time.

Between 1906 and 1910 the Glasgow ILP established such an influence over the other socialist groups in Glasgow that even the syndicalist upsurge immediately before the First World War could not dislodge it. The most important weapon in building the ILP was its paper, the Forward.

The Forward first appeared on October 13 1906. It was supported by skilled working men who were already members of the ILP[1] and by men like R.E. Muirhead and John Robertson, who had supported the Young Scots society. They were in favour of Scottish Home Rule and working class representation, and helped finance and write Forward[2]. Open to all it became a forum for major discussions within the socialist movement and between the socialists and Liberalism.

At first, the Forward concentrated on settling accounts with Liberalism and establishing its own perspective. One of the earliest articles to appear was John Robertson's "Wanted: a New Constitution" which pressed the case for Irish Home Rule through the Young Scots' slogan of "Home Rule all Round"[3]. In a later article Robertson presented the case as the culmination of Reform, arguing that the parliamentary machine was "vitally inadequate":

1. The Forward was edited and largely owned by Tom Johnston, who was a member of the ILP but who had an open editorial policy. See Muirhead Correspondence, Muirhead Collection, Baillie Library.
2. While lecturing for the Young Scots, Robertson wrote the early article "Wanted: a New Constitution". John Orr wrote to Muirhead disagreeing with the Forward article on land values, November 5, 1906 and in 1907 he was associated with the United Campaign for the Taxation of Land Values. See John Orr correspondence, Muirhead Collection. But Orr still wrote an article on poverty in Forward on December 15 1906. See John Robertson correspondence in the R.E. Muirhead Collection, Baillie Library.
3. Forward, October 13 1906.

"It is bad enough that the old machine will have to make the new; that every item in the reconstruction - franchise, reform, payment of members, abolition of plural voting, and provision against minorities carrying members in the case of party splits, as well as the great measure of Federal Home Rule and elimination of the House of Lords - must pass through the present overworked and congested House of Commons. But to leave the imperfect machine to operate in perpetuity, toiling hopelessly to overtake an ever-increasing accumulation of legislative needs would be to give up all pretence and all reasonable hope of any comprehensive or systematic advance in our political life."[1]

Radical Liberals believed that Parliament had to be transformed to implement their programme. John Robertson concluded: "The congested machine must be superseded by a system of Devolution and decentralisation." And commitment to some form of devolution and to Scottish, Irish, Welsh and English Home Rule remained a permanent feature of ILP ideology also [2].

Another element of radical Liberalism which the ILP retained and strengthened was its position on the landlords and the land question[3]. From the first issue of Forward, the paper repudiated Henry George's 'Single Tax' philosophy[4]. It also attacked the Liberal's Small Holdings Bill asking "Can a few thousand small holdings settle the question of congested cities?"[5]

1. Forward, October 27 1906.
2. This commitment to Scottish Home Rule was echoed twenty years later by the Clydesiders in Parliament in 1923.
3. This was not unique to Glasgow. The Land Nationalisation Society was set up in 1881. Its programme was the state ownership of all land with leasing to tenant farmers. It was started by the Liberals but relied on the support of Trades Unions and Trades Councils. In the 1890s it sent "yellow vans" to convert the masses and in 1899 had visitors attend 28 Trades Councils. In Glasgow before the First World War the land nationalisation propaganda activity was largely carried by the ILP itself whose attitude paralleled its commitment to state and municipal nationalisation.
4. See: Forward, October 13, October 20, November 10, December 8, December 22 1906; and a series specifically attacking the 'popular fallacy' of Henry Georgism in Forward, January 12 and January 17, 1907.
5. Forward, January 4 1908.

Forward supported land nationalisation - it was the least controversial position among its writers -and Tom Johnston wrote a series of articles on the landowners of Scotland which combined hatred of the landlord and the aristocracy, Liberalism's two major enemies[1]. Their personal antagonism to an Argyll or a Buccleugh[2] is much sharper than towards a Beardmore. By 1908 Forward clearly identified the capitalist as the enemy alongside the landlord, but there is no equivalent exposure of the great shipbuilding and engineering firms of the Clyde[3]. This distinction arose partly, of course, from the experience of the Highland crofters whose struggles the ILP fully supported[4].

The Liberal Government also retreated on the question of the franchise. In January and February 1907 while the Women's Enfranchisement Bill was being debated, the columns of Forward were full of the question: on what basis should women be enfranchised? There was no opposition to this, the final act of Reform, within the Glasgow ILP. The issue debated was whether women's suffrage should be part of a full adult suffrage bill with no property qualifications -

1. The series began in Forward, June 27 1908 and was eventually published in Our Noble Families (1908).
2. For example, Johnston wrote, Forward, September 18 1909: "Honestly, I find it difficult to say what I think of the Dukes. These low, mean, despicable, contemptible wretches, clutching like Shylocks their blood money from the lands their ancestors stole; these whining, ungentlemanly, non-moral cowards surfeiting themselves in the plenty have have wrung from the poor; ravishing from aged labourers their pitifully small pensions; playing on the ignorance of the people to escape taxation; lazy, idle, vicious, greedy, clutching, grasping - what more can I say of them?"
3. Only during the First World War does Forward expose the 'Vickers-Beardmore octopus' - and this is an armaments firm and an easy target for the radical Liberal and anti-war mongers of the ILP.
4. When the Highland Land League was re-established it had its own weekly column in Forward.

described as "the orthodox 'only adult and nothing else' view"[1]- or whether it should be given on equal terms with men whatever the qualifications. The "adult and nothing else" argument was a way of subordinating the demand for women's enfranchisement to the socialist demand for full adult enfranchisement. It became the predominant view of the Glasgow ILP, although women suffragists arguing the alternative case (with which Tom Johnston was sympathetic) were given considerable space in Forward.

The most crucial aspect of Liberalism taken over by the ILP was so much taken for granted that it was rarely stated: its acceptance of the evolutionary nature of social development. This theory was at the heart of Glasgow ILP's municipal socialism. As two historians of local government pointed out in 1903[2], Municipal Reform was seen as the final stage of the great Reform Acts, enfranchising and giving control to all "citizens".

The first issue of Forward argued:

> "The purpose of socialism is to capture our municipal institutions in order that they may be used as a means of practically advancing the Socialistic programme in politics"3.

The ILP's brand of municipal socialism assumed that any municipalisation was socialism - a parallel approach to that of the state socialists about nationalisation (also held by Glasgow ILP).

1. Tom Johnston's characterisation in Forward, February 2 1907 of O'Connor Kessack's reply to Theresa Billington. Margaret Bondfield was another supporter of the "only adult" position.
2. J. Redlich and F.W. Hirst "The History of Local Government in England" 1958 re-issue. MacMillans p.223 (2nd Ed.1970).
3. Forward, October 13 1906. This was followed by many other articles on municipalisation in politics including one which argued that municipal trading could reduce the rates.

Since even the "Moderates" on the Glasgow City Council could be seen to advance the cause of municipalisation - and hence municipal socialism - the ILP saw it as a natural evolutionary development within capitalism. This view echoed the earlier attitude of the Glasgow Trades Council[1], and explains the ILP's defence of ex-Provost Chisholm when Scott Gibson attacked him in the 1906 municipal election[2]. The Forward's priorities were quite clear:

> "The truth is, the Glasgow Town Council are simply playing with municipal problems, the Housing Question is the most pressing of all Municipal Questions, for on the home life of the working classes depends the stability of our national life"3.

And since Chisholm was actually driven out as Provost in 1902 on the question of Municipal Housing they backed him as "the only man who ever began any definite practical scheme for housing the workers of Glasgow"[4].

The brewing "Trade's" antagonism to Chisholm was another reason the ILP supported him. They opposed temperance extremism, but were often personally temperance themselves, strongly opposed to the brewing interests. Forward frequently exposed the hypocrisy of the Temperance Movement which would rather vote publican than socialist

1. Glasgow Trades Council welcomed the new municipal tramways in July 1894 "as a further step twoards municipal socialism". quoted in W. Hamish Fraser, op cit, p.10. At the 1893 Belfast TUC, "John Burns made his most effective contribution to the debates when he called upon his fellows to capture the Town and City Councils, arguing that in these decentralised bodies lay their chief powers in matters of government". See D. Lowe, Souvenirs of Scottish Labour
2. Scott Gibson was denounced by Forward for speaking against Chisholm in Woodside. Gibson was standing as a "Labour" candidate in Dalmarnock but was opposed by an official Labour candidate, William Stewart.
3. Forward, October 20 1906.
4. Ibid.

because a socialist policy, the municipal control of the liquor traffice, was more evil than drink itself[1]. The ILP also attacked the Temperance Movement because of its theory that poverty was caused by drink[2].

The ideology of municipal socialism could mean all things to all men. On the one hand those ILP members strongly committed to a form of utopian left-wing municipal socialism could identify it with the utopian, humanitarian socialism of William Morris[3], or with the rising of the Paris Commune[4]. Later when the syndicalists attack bureaucratic state socialism, it is possible for these municipal socialists to argue that they were totally opposed to bureaucracy: they were for local self-government alongside workers' self-government.

On the other hand it was possible for Wheatley to argue that Glasgow already had municipal socialism under the "Moderates" and what was needed was more of the same[5]. The problem the ILP saw with the "Moderates" was that they would not provide municipal housing to improve "the home life of the working classes"[6]. It was also possible for the electoral strategy to become much more important than

1. This was despite the Temperance Movement's acknowledgement that there was a higher proportion of temperance men in the Parliamentary Labour Party than in any other party; and despite the fact that nearly all Glasgow ILP members were teetotal. Forward reported both the Local Vetoists and the Prohibitionists "are virtually as one regarding the municipal control of the liquor traffic. They both become frantic in their rage against it". See Forward, December 8 1906. And in January 1908 when the Manx liquor trade was taken over by the island's government, Forward proclaimed it socialism. See Forward, January 18 1908.
2. H. McShane and J. Smith, No Mean Fighter, p. 35.
3. Forward, March 28 1908
4. Ibid.
5. Glasgow Observer, February 24 1906
6. Forward, October 20 1906

socialist propaganda: the Forward columnist, "Rob Roy", criticised the SLP for arguing the case for confiscation just before the Parish Council elections[1].

The local interest in municipal socialism had a marked effect on the Glasgow ILP's attitude to Ireland. After 1907 and the Belfast strike, it largely approached Ireland through the municipal politics of Belfast rather than as a National political question or even as Irish Home Rule[2]. Not until 1912 was Irish Home Rule debated again[3].

Municipal Socialist ideology could also drift towards the Modern Conservative rather than the Liberal tradition. The "feeding of necessitous schoolchildren", for example, was always a major plank in the Glasgow ILP platform for election to the School Boards[4]. Yet this policy of "social reform" was also supported by the Catholic weekly Glasgow Observer as a charity which supported the institution of the family. Indeed, in its view of the family being destroyed by capitalism and defended by socialism[5], the Glasgow ILP came closest to Modern Conservatism[6].

1. Forward, January 4, 11 1908.
2. Forward, January 4 1908.
3. See below, p.432 .
4. Forward, November 24, December 1,8,15 1906; January 25, February 28 1908.
5. Forward, January 11 1908.
6. Thus in 1908 M. M'Crae made a socialist critique of the marriage laws arguing there were not enough of them. See Forward, February 1 1908. Later he came up with the classic view of Modern Conservatism: "We look on the nation as a family of which we are members..." See Forward, July 4 1908.

On Ireland and women's suffrage, however, it was the radicalism of the ILP (derived from the extreme Liberalism of Glasgow) rather than any inherent strength within municipal or state socialism that kept it to the left[1]. That radicalism was in sharp contrast to both the Scottish Council of the Liberal Party and the actions of the 1906 Liberal Government. After 1906 the Glasgow ILP's influence grew in membership and confidence.

In October 1906 a meeting of the Scottish Council of the Liberal Party disassociated itself from

> "a party the avowed object of which is to the complete destruction of those principles of individual liberty for which Liberalism has always contended"2.

This was a declaration of war. Not just on the "Parliamentary Independent Labour Party" but also on the Lib-Labs. Early in 1908 the leading Liberal working man, John Battersby, was ousted from office by the Hutchestown and Blackfriars Liberal Association for his "socialist sympathies"[3].

In 1908 Forward printed an article reviewing Campbell-Bannerman's administration[4]. It argued that the Liberals had created more peers per year than the Tories (19); that Old Age Pensions had not been

1. The contrast can be seen in Liverpool where the Liberal tradition was not a substantial part of Labourism, and the attitudes to women and to Irish independence were very much worse.
2. Forward October 27 1906.
3. Forward, February 15 1908.
4. Forward, April 18 1908. The article was culled from the magazine Socialist Torch produced by the Glasgow University Socialists.

brought in while Lord Cromer of Egypt received a £900 a year pension; that the taxation of feu duties had been postponed; that France and Britain had floated a loan to save the Russian Duma; and that John Morley had outlawed political movements in Indian universities. The same issue carried a scathing attack on the crimes of British imperialism in Egypt and a later issue denounced the Old Age Pension Bill[1]. Disillusion helped build a large and very enthusiastic May Day demonstration in 1908[2].

1. Forward, June 20 1908. Again taken from Socialist Torch which was campaigning against Lloyd George the Liberal candidate for the rectorship of Glasgow University. The article was entitled "Only a Half-crust after all".
2. Forward, May 9 1908.

John Wheatley and the Catholic Socialist Society

Equally important in the development of Glasgow's Labour Movement was the emergence of a group of Catholic Socialists within the Irish community. Led by John Wheatley they eventually merged with the ILP. Wheatley had been a member of the United Irish League. His transition from Liberalism to Labour was essentially an evolutionary process and like other Glasgow socialists it was reflected in an evolutionary theory of socialism. In 1906-7 he argued that a Catholic could be a socialist - as opposed to merely supporting Labour[1]: firstly he defined "continental socialism" differently from British evolutionary socialism - so Pope Leo XIII's encyclical against socialism didn't apply; and secondly he argued Glasgow already had municipal socialism - that there was no reason why any municipality should carry water and not bread, posts and not telegraphs, and that Glasgow's existing tramways, libraries, parks, gasworks and waterworks were proof that municipal socialism could work[2].

Wheatley founded the Catholic Socialist Society in October 1906. It initially had 50 members and by March 1907, 100 people attended its annual meeting. In December 1908 the Glasgow Observer moderated its opposition and described them as only "partly" socialist and as "social reformers". It was really a Catholic version of the ILP. Its meetings were reported in Forward and Tom Johnston attended its annual gatherings.

1. The Glasgow Observer, in July-September 1907 carried a debate between Wheatley and Father Puissant which Wheatley fairly clearly won.
2. Glasgow Observer, February 24 1906.[1] Letter signed "Catholic Socialist".

Socialism developed roots in the Irish community in Glasgow at this time following the 1906 election successes and the subsequent disillusion with the Liberal Government over Home Rule. In the January 1906 election the national Executive of the UIL supported Labour candidates where they were also backed by the Liberals, but in Glasgow it also supported George Barnes in the Hutchestown and Blackfriars constituency against a Liberal candidate. Despite rumours that the local UIL William O'Brien branch leadership would not abide by this decision, the majority agreed to do so[1] arguing that members were not fit to fight for Ireland if they failed to become "recruiting sergeants" for Barnes. Many canvassed enthusiastically for Barnes <u>because</u> he was the Labour candidate and got help from other UIL branches, notably the Home Government and Wolfe Tone branches - in doing so[2]. Other members of the branch circulated an appeal for support for Bonar Law. But they resigned from the UIL before a motion to expel them ("a very proper one") could be put into effect. Still others did the absolute minimum[3].

The <u>Glasgow Observer</u> greeted the results of the 1906 election as a vindication of the UIL's policy:

1. <u>Glasgow Observer</u>, January 13 1906. The motives for supporting the Executive were mixed. One pointed out it had always been John Ferguson's branch (the Home Government branch) which had been "revolting" against the UIL Executive, and that they should stick to the Executive decision. On April 14 1906, the <u>Glasgow Observer</u> reported that the support for Barnes was rushed through at a hurriedly called meeting of 40 members in order to prevent the branch leadership organising its opposition properly.
2. <u>Glasgow Observer</u>, April 14 1906.
3. <u>Glasgow Observer</u>, January 20, March 31 1906.

> "The tactics and wisdom of the Irish Party have never received greater vindication than in connection with the remarkable Labour Poll which has taken place all over the country. The Irish voters were advised in almost every instance to vote for the Labour candidates and the Catholic electors have largely followed the same advice. Anyone who totals up the Labour and Irish vote in the new House of Commons will see what an enormous power it can exercise".1

And it argued that the Irish vote had won Glasgow for Liberalism and had secured Barnes' victory, quoting him to that effect[2].

In 1907, despite the Liberals' belief that Redmond would support it, the Government's Irish Council Bill was decisively rejected by the Irish National Convention[3]. The Tories also introduced a Convent Inspection Bill in the context of a Protestant Alliance propaganda campaign against "torture" in convents[4]. Sixty-one Liberal MPs voted for it[5]. In Glasgow Samual Boal, a Protestant lecturer, was active on Glasgow Green trampling rosary beads into the ground[6].

1. Glasgow Observer, January 20 1906.
2. Glasgow Observer, March 31 1906. "In an interview with a pressman prior to the election, Mr. Barnes asked would he really get the Irish vote. 'Undoubtedly' was the answer. 'Then I win by 300' was Mr. Barnes' reply. His majority was 310".
3. Glasgow Observer, May 23 1907. Redmond moved the resolution which demanded "a measure of self-government which will give to the Irish people complete control of their own domestic affairs" (my emphasis, JS). Birrell's Bill was rejected as merely administrative devolution.
4. The Glasgow Observer, October 12 1907 commented: "Week after week, the author of European sidelights in the Glasgow Herald retails ludicrous and impossible stories about the Vatican."
5. The Glasgow Observer, June 22 1907 published a 'black list' of Liberals who had voted for a Commission to inquire into whether Convent inspection was necessary. It argued the motion was "carried by the weight of Unionist votes", but its own figures showed 45 Tories voting for, and 6 against, with 61 Liberals in favour and 74 against (including the Front Bench).
6. Glasgow Observer, March 31, June 30 1906.

In Liverpool disillusion with the Liberals and fear of the anti-Catholic agitation (and the sectarian riots of 1909) led to a strengthening of defensive Catholic organisation[1]. But in Glasgow, while militant Irish[2] and Catholic[3] organisations were still present, the same disenchantment with the Liberals led to a shift towards Labour. This was possible because of the radical tradition of John Ferguson within the UIL in Glasgow; because of the presence of the Glasgow ILP; and because of the existence of the Catholic Socialist Society as an organisation to group Irish Catholics increasingly disillusioned with Liberalism. Thus in the middle of the defensive agitation by the Roman Church on the Education Bill and against the socialist commitment to secular education[4], the Catholic Socialist

1. See below, p.358-359.
2. In 1906 the Sinn Fein policy of passive resistance was being debated in Glasgow as an alternative to the UIL. Sinn Fein was established in 1905. The Glasgow Observer, February 17 1906, reported a meeting addressed by Bulmer Hobson : "What they meant by passive resistance was that they would act on the defensive, and make the whole government of Britain impossible... if the Irish people were armed, the English Government would be cowardly enough to break down in face of stern opposition". In its March 17 1906 edition it wrote: "The 'Sinn Fein, or Self Help Movement' is essentially a young men's movement and its leaders are confident that the policy will yet be adopted by Irishmen generally at home and abroad".
3. Glasgow Observer, September 1907. The Ancient Order of Hibernians held their first outdoor Sunday meeting in Scotland in Glasgow under the auspices of the Townhead Division. 3,000 attended. The magistrates refused them permission to walk down certain streets.
4. The Glasgow Observer, September 28 1907, described Forward as "our excellent little friend" - a description impossible in the Liverpool Catholic Herald - but opposed its views on secular education: "The Socialists want to clear all religious teaching out of the elementary schools. The Catholic position is that the State should pay for secular education and allow school managers to teach anything in addition that they may please. The Socialist position seems to be that if the State pays for secular teaching, religious teaching must be forbidden or prohibited, even if given at private cost... so long as that remains an item of the Socialist programme then emphatically no Catholic ought to be a socialist".

Society could still assert the need for Catholics to be socialists[1].

Two years later, in his debate with Hilaire Belloc, John Wheatley synthesised the Radical tradition with state and municipal socialism to arrive at a position able to refute Belloc's "servile state" arguments. His vision of state socialism began from the central problem of Liberal commonsense thought:

> "Above all, people would have what they miss most now - security in life. We would stand free - masters of our own destiny. And the men would work while the children were being educated, and the mothers attended to the homes. These homes would be brighter and happier when the spectre of poverty no longer haunted them, and the light of learning illuminated each mind. (Loud and prolonged cheers.)"2

And his case for nationalisation, and municipal and state socialism now clearly rejected the teaching of Rerum Novarum:

> "Our plan is a simple and sensible one. We propose that one by one these concerns should be taken over by the State or the Municipality, and the profits used to give better and healthier conditions to the workers of the country. Ultimately almost all the principal means of production, distribution and trading would be public property, and the power of men to make profit on the labour of their fellows would no longer exist.
>
> Certain little lines of business which lend themselves to private or family management would remain private property. Or means of production used by men in voluntary co-operation might also remain in private ownership. Of course, as these developed the stage when they could be no longer worked without the employment of men on whose labour profit would be charged, they in turn would be taken over".3

1. Glasgow Observer, July 27 1907. One letter replying to Wheatley's protagonist, Father Puissant, asked: "Does Father Puissant ever think of the thousands of Irish people that have been driven from Ireland by a privileged class, i.e. the landlords... When the Rev. Father proves to us that the Almighty God created this country for the dukes or landlords then we will cease being socialists".
2. Forward, November 27 1909.
3. Forward, November 27 1909.

On the one hand, then, Wheatley argued a Labour world vision against economic Liberalism; but on the other he accepted Liberal conservative attitudes on the family and for his vision of socialism drew upon what Vincent[1] has described as the essential element of Liberalism - the freedom to call no man master. This, the ideology of the Glasgow ILP, built on Liberal commonsense, could appeal to both Protestant and Catholic working men.

1. J. Vincent, Formation of the Liberal Party , p. xii.

Trade unionism

Shinwell became a delegate to the Glasgow Trades Council in 1906. Later he described its influence:

> "In those days the reports of the Council meetings received widespread publicity and were eagerly read by the thousands of workers the organisation represented. The high moral tone of the Trades Council ensured its prestige and the unswerving loyalty of the workers".1

The Trades Council in fact only represented the organised minority of Glasgow workers; but it was an increasingly well-organised minority[2]. In the engineering shops the system of shop stewards and workshop delegates was spreading[3] but skilled engineering workers were facing a problem most other craftsmen didn't: the introduction of machinery and a particularly strong local Engineering Employers' Federation[4]. In 1906 when the boiler-makers struck to demand the restoration of the 5 per cent wage cut enforced in the recession of 1903/4, their defeat created another argument for the spread of socialism[5]. The paradox of strengthening workshop organisation and the failure to restore or advance wages in engineering and shipbuilding[6] in 1905-7 opened many of these organised skilled workers to socialism.

1. E. Shinwell, Conflict without Malice (1955), p.40.
2. H. Clegg, Fox and Thompson.
3. R. Croucher, Local Autonomy in the Amalgamated Society of Engineers Unpublished MA thesis. Warwick (1971) p. 29 .
4. R. Croucher, ibid., p.14-19 .
5. Forward, December 1 1906, commented: now the Govan man "knows that the place to strike is in the ballot box. He knows now that trade unionism is almost powerless against Associated capitalism".
6. George Carson wrote in the Glasgow Trades Council Annual Report for 1906-7, p. 13: "While in the Engineering and the shipbuilding trades there has been a record year, both as regards output and profits earned, up till now the workers engaged in these trades have not received any recognition in the way of an advance on wages". The following year, Annual Report 1907-8, the employers' success is attributed to "the absolute completeness of their organisation and the enormous capital behind them, and the want of a similar completeness on the part of the Trades Unions".

In many ways, however, the 1908 slump was the crucial watershed for the Labour movement in Glasgow[1]. This was because the extent of unemployment meant large sections of skilled workers[2] were laid off in a period when the political responsibility lay with the Liberal Government. The result was that whereas in 1904-5 the most active unemployed agitation had been in Manchester, in 1908 while Manchester was still very active, Glasgow had become the leading centre[3].

The slump created widespread poverty. A special relief fund was established at Christmas 1907 and within five months there had been over 7,000 applicants[4]. In September 1908 The Times reported,

> "The trouble seems to be more acute, more extensive and of longer standing in the great industrial and commercial district of which the city is the centre than in any other part of the Kingdom. Govan, Paisley, Port Glasgow, Greenock, and other neighbouring places are all more or less affected... Last week at Govan a deputation to the parish council from the trade unions stated that "as a result of unemployment there were at present between 16,000 and 18,000 in Govan on the verge of starvation. Of the 4,000 dock labourers resident in Govan, 3,000 had been idle for the past nine months".5

1. This point is made by K. Middlemas, The Clydesiders , (1965) p. 44 who argues the 1908 slump "...divides the history of the political development in the West of Scotland. It did more to transfer loyalty from the Liberal Party to Labour than the results of the 1906 election or the waves of 'strikes' and threats of 'direct action' which followed in 1910-12". Despite some inaccuracies, his assessment of the ILP in Glasgow is borne out in this research and in H. McShane & J. Smith No Mean Fighter , op cit.
2. In August 1909, the Glasgow Distress Committee undertook a house to house census of the unemployed. The Glasgow Herald, September 1 1909, published the results: Of the 18,200 unemployed men counted, 38.4 per cent were skilled workers - 1,381 in the building industry, 4,271 in engineering and metal work, 1,162 in wood working and the furnishing trades and 183 in printing. The census did not cover the great shipbuilding centres of Govan and Partick which were hit at least as hard.
3. The Times, September 29 1908.
4. Ibid.
5. The Times, September 29 1908.

Faced with the worst unemployment in the country, the Glasgow Distress Committee[1] went beyond the Classical Liberal strategies of emigration and charity and took over the City Council's Labour Exchange[2]. It also attempted to create work by founding the Placerigg Labour Colony to give jobs to about 900 men on road and farm work[3]. This scheme was attacked by both the Glasgow Herald and the Glasgow Charity Organisation Society, who argued,

> "... the year's business of providing work for the unemployed at Placerigg and elsewhere has resulted in a loss of considerably over £40,000, and this in affording employment to an average daily number of only 903 men... From the economic point of view the experience of municipal relief work is almost Gilbertian".4

The depth of the crisis, however, revealed the bankruptcy of the Classical Liberal explanation of unemployment - an individual failing. And the Glasgow Distress Committee went on to the offensive against the arguments that relief work would encourage moral failing and that emigration was the only answer[5]. The argument that

1. The GDC was funded by the Local Government Board quite separately from the Lord Provost's Relief Fund which raised £8,000 in January and £20,000 in September 1908. It covered Greater Glasgow with members appointed from Glasgow Town Council and the Parish Councils of Glasgow, Govan, Cathcart, Eastwood and Rutherglen. See Glasgow Herald, October 19 1909.
2. At the beginning of 1908 the GDC took over the Town Council's Labour Exchange which had primarily dealt with domestic servants and in 1908 found jobs for 3,217 men and boys out of the 20,000 applications made to it.
3. Glasgow Herald, October 19 1909.
4. Ibid.
5. John Paterson pointed out, ibid, that over 10,000 of the individual applications for work made to the Labour Exchange in 1908 did so for the first time, and that half of all applicants were unknown to the Charity Organisation Society or the Lord Provosts' Fund. He also pointed out that helping the Salvation Army emigrate 33 families had cost over £1,000.

unemployment was the product of drunkeness[1] provoked a real fury among the socialists and active trade unionists in Glasgow, and the campaigns by the SDF and ILP pointing out that capitalism was to blame struck a real chord.

In 1908 the Glasgow Trades Council asked all affiliated trades for information on unemployment. Thirty local trade unions replied they were paying "idle benefit" - the skilled trades - and 12 replied they were not. The 30 who were had an aggregate membership in the Glasgow District of 24,945 of whom 4,171 were unemployed: 16.7 per cent. These unions paid out £56,827 in benefit in 1908. The 12 unions not paying idle benefit had an aggregate Glasgow membership of 5,815, of whom 1,750 (30.8 per cent) were unemployed[2].

The first demonstration on unemployment in 1908 was actually an initiative taken by the SDF. It asked,

> "All branches of trade unions, friendly societies, Co-op societies, and Socialist bodies, together with Trades Councils to be asked to co-operate, to make the demonstration a great success... Do honour to your National Board by demanding the Right to Work on his anniversary".3

It took place on January 25 1908, the day of the opening of Parliament, and resolutions demanding the Right to Work were carried. But it wasn't until the Glasgow Trades Council and the ILP got involved and set up an Unemployed Committee that unemployed demonstrations got quite large.

1. The Times, September 29 1908, for example, wrote: "The Lord Provost publicly reminded Mr. Cunningham Grahame who headed a socialistic deputation last week, of the excessive prevalence of drunkeness in Glasgow; and the charge is not to be denied, though the agitators of course repudiate it with scorn. No town in this country shows more clearly than Glasgow how large a part in the production of distress is played by the habits of the people themselves".
2. Glasgow Trades Council, Annual Report, 1908-9.
3. Forward, January 11 1908.

The Unemployed Committee was strongly opposed to the Placerigg scheme which paid men 12s 6d a week and gave them soup at dinnertime, and to the 'work or starve' attitude of the Lord Provost's Fund and the Charity Organisation Society. However, considering the widespread poverty, they agreed with the need for the fund while pointing out the political moral:

> "The Unemployed question is no longer a question of periodical occurrence, as it probably was some 50 or 60 years ago, but is now a permanent factor in our industrial organisation belonging to no particular country but in reality general and inevitable, wherever the system of modern capitalism exists. In fact, Capitalism is the common denominator for unemployment. Down with Capitalism!"1

June 27 1908 saw a massive Right to Work demonstration of over 35,000 in Glasgow which was highly reminiscent of 1884, except that unskilled workers and socialist groups were marching too. Forty-three trades took part and Forward reported:

> "Each organisation carried a banner or symbols of its trade, craft or purpose. The joiners carried a banner of great historic interest. It was carried at demonstrations in the Reform year of 1832.
>
> The following mottoes inscribed on this banner of 1832 reflect the spirit of those times:-
>
> 'They are unworthy of freedom, who hope for it from hands other than their own'.
>
> 'We'll never swerve. We'll stand apart. We'll have our rights. We will be free'.
>
> This spirit - the spirit of self-reliance and independence was the spirit that prevailed at the Demonstration on Saturday. By the manner in which the resolutions were carried, it was evident that we also are determined to have our rights - the right to live, and to be free - to live a happy life".2

The working men of Glasgow saw no contradiction between Liberal "reform" and the Right to Work.

1. Forward, January 11 1908.
2. Forward, July 4 1908

The speakers on the four platforms were a mixture of Unemployed Committee speakers, Councillors, trade union officials, Glasgow Trades Council leaders, SDF members and ILPers[1]. John Hill, a boilermaker, spoke of the shock the 1908 slump gave to skilled workers:

> "Only a few years ago unemployment had no terrors for well-organised skilled trades... Now the tables are turned. With improved machinery our craft is at a discount, and a boy from school now tends a machine, which does the work of three men... It is mostly machine-minders that are wanted, and a line from some well-known Liberal or Tory certifying that you are not an agitator or a Socialist, is the chief recommendation in the shipbuilding and engineering trades. Thus today, we find the ranks of the unemployment largely recruited by men of intellect: men of genius, and men of high character and independent means."1

Several speakers reiterated there was no cure for unemployment outside the abolition of capitalism, but that meantime they had to support schemes like Placerigg and people like the Lord Provost who supported such schemes. This argument, so different from the demand for relief without task work made in the 1920s and 1930s, was accompanied by opposition to emigration as a solution to unemployment.

Following this initial agitation, John M'Ateer, a former SDF member, John Armour, Muir Watson and Tom Walton organised an "Agitation Committee" among the unemployed themselves. This Committee organised demonstrations of the unemployed on Thursdays and on September 3 1908 1,000 demonstrators rushed the City Chambers arguing that the "Social Democrats, the ILPers, the Trades Unionists, and the Trades Council, have wholly failed in their duty towards the unemployed in Glasgow"[2]. They then withdrew in order for Tom Kerr, John M'Ateer, Muir Watson, Douglas and McCall to go in as a deputation.

1. Ibid.
2. Forward, July 31 1909.

The following Sunday the official Unemployed Committee organised a demonstration asking to be allowed to attend services in the cathedrals[1]. The next Wednesday evening, September 9, the Agitation Committee organised a midnight march to the Lord Provost's house. The police charged the crowd and ultimately broke up the march in Charing Cross[2].

The following Sunday 8,000 attended a protest meeting on Glasgow Green where there were two platforms - an official Unemployed Committee one and one run by the Agitation Committee[3]. The meeting passed resolutions condemning the failure of the Unemployed Workmen's Act and the police for batoning down workers the previous Wednesday[4]. R.B. Cunningham Graham spoke on both platforms attacking the Liberal Government:

> "How he hated that phrase 'the people'. It was a sort of moral continuation of the feudal system. Who were 'the people'. Asquith, Haldane, Lord Rosebery, Lord Crewe, everyone of the pickers and stealers who were in office in the most democratic Government the world has ever seen were equally 'the people'"5.

1. Forward, September 12 1908. In response to the Agitation Committee's activities the Unemployed Committee described itself as the "bonafide unemployed".
2. Forward, September 19 1908.
3. Forward, September 19 1908. John Howden, President of the Trades Council argued that three unions in Glasgow had spent more on their members than the municipality had spent on all the workers of Glasgow; at the same time, the municipality were actually laying off men.
4. Several speakers commented that the Chief Constable had recently come from Belfast, saying he should realise baton charges were not suitable for Glasgow. Ibid.
5. Ibid. Graham argued for building roads and referred to the 1886 agitation and to Gladstone: "The only time he ever spoke to Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Gladstone said to him - 'Is it true that at a certain meeting in the East End of London of the Unemployed' - that was about twenty years ago; the same old unemployed (laughter) - 'it is true, Mr. Graham, that you advised the people of the East End to burn down the West End?' His answer was - 'I do not set up to be wiser than another, but I am not an absolute idiot. If I had given them any advice at all, it would have been to burn down their own houses in the East End and go and live in the West End'. (Laughter). Mr. Gladstone looked at him with that big eagle eye which they had heard so much about in history and said -'Sir, I think this conversation had better end.' (Renewed laughter).

The Protestant lecturer, Samual Boal, tried to disrupt the meeting by singing hymns and was only saved from being thrown in the Clyde by the police. The meeting encouraged closer co-operation between the two committees. It also highlighted the antagonism to the Liberal Government and the police.

On Thursday, September 17 1908, both groups were involved in a demonstration in George Square attended by about 7,000. Muir Watson of the Agitation Committee spoke, as did Cunningham Graham, whose proposal for County and Municipal Councils to undertake road building schemes was carried unanimously[1]. Afterwards it was agreed to hold a week of local meetings, beginning on Monday at Parkhead Cross and then going to Anderston Cross, Paisley Road Toll, George Square and ending in Springburn on Friday.

After M'Ateer and Watson spoke at the Wednesday meeting at Paisley Road Toll, they marched the meeting to George Square and led it to the Distress Committee's offices in Cochrane Street. There they were told that nothing could be done until another 2,500 men had been dealt with. On Thursday, Cunningham Graham took a deputation of 20 to the City Chambers while two meetings formed at the Scott Monument. According to Tom Kerr, the Lord Provost insulted the unemployed by complaining of 200 more convictions for drunkeness,

1. Forward, September 19 1908

"the inference being that the major portion of poverty was due to intemperate habits"[1].

During the 1908 unemployed agitation an attempt was made to mobilise the Orange element in Glasgow against the socialists. In March 1908 the Anti-Socialist Union began a campaign in Camlachie, the East End of Glasgow; but the socialists had banded together and taken over their pitches[2]. When Samual Boal tried the same in September and October, the socialists again united to defend each other. On Friday, September 25 1908 Boal held a meeting at Merkland Street, Partick, to boast of socialist meetings being broken up by Orangemen[3]. Tom Johnston and Patrick Dolan were the two central villains, as was the plunder, free love and anarchy of socialism[4]. Two days later, when a joint meeting of the unemployed committees[5]

1. Forward, October 3 1908. Forward's attack on the Lord Provost "Baker of biscuits" Sir William Bilsland argued: "Neither he nor any other individual in his class would find their positions tenable for one hour longer, if the workers ceased to muddle their brains with the drink so temptingly displayed in the shops, so conveniently placed at their doors". The anger at the Lord Provost was increased by the recollection that two weeks earlier he had wept in front of an unemployed deputation while "outside in the rain two thousand workers were being pushed and bullied by the police, some of whom were on horseback and doing their utmost to incite a riot". See The Socialist, November 1908. This replied to the temperance campaigners: "The reason that the workers are poor is not because they spend one penny out of four pennies on drink, but because they are robbed by the wealthy class out of eightpence of every shilling they produce".
2. Forward, March 7 1908.
3. Forward, October 3 1908 admitted: "The Socialists of Partick and Whiteinch have been roughly handled at two of their meetings by hooligans".
4. Ibid.
5. The speakers were M'Ateer, Muir Watson, AR Turner and Shinwell.

was being held in George Square, Boal held an alternative meeting at Bridgeton Cross, and the police formed a cordon three deep between the opposing forces. That evening, however, Boal failed to break up the regular Cathedral Square ILP meeting as he had done the previous Sunday[1]:

> "St. Rollox Branch ILP held their usual meeting at Cathedral Square on Sunday night, which was addressed by A.R. Turner. He spoke on the unemployed question. The Square was packed. Four meetings were going on simultaneously. What a babble of voices! Boal was there and appealed to the police several times to remove the Socialist Sabbath-breakers off the Square. But Boal is not police superintendent.
>
> The Socialist meeting was the last to break up that night. Everything went smoothly, if not quietly".2

Thus long before the Home Rule agitation breaks in Glasgow it was the socialists versus the Protestants.

Boal's organisation of the Glasgow Orange hooligan element during the unemployed agitation of 1908 was proof of the existence of a layer of workers open to his politics. But while it was possible to mobilise several thousand Orangemen at Bridgeton Cross or at Whiteinch, elsewhere they were weak and in any case would be opposed by several thousand organised socialists[3]. The 'commonsense' of Glasgow did not give them an extensive periphery to build among[4].

1. After Boal's disastrous intervention at the unemployed protest meeting he had successfully mobilised the Bridgeton Orangemen to shut down that evening's Cathedral Square ILP and Jail Square SLP's meetings as well as the Bridgeton Cross Clarion Scouts meeting. The Socialist, November 1908.
2. Forward, October 3 1908.
3. After the Glasgow Green demonstration on Sunday, September 27 both the Clarion Scouts and the SLP meetings had audiences of 4,000, and the Glasgow SLP publicly thanked the SDP, ILP and Clarion Scouts for turning up to defend them. See The Socialist, November 1908.
4. The Glasgow socialist movement forced Boal to make them his enemy as well as the Roman Catholic Church, something Wise in Liverpool did not face.

But for a time they were a real problem and created a unity on the left in a "free speech" campaign that even involved the SLP[1].

At the end of October, the two committees, the Unemployed Workers Committee and the Agitation Committee, met to discuss fusion. M'Ateer opposed the absorption of the Agitation Committee policies into the other body and his resolutions were carried by a small majority. But when the joint committee became involved in preparing for the municipal elections in November 1908, he resigned[2]. The almost daily meetings in George Square fell away[3], and although M'Ateer blamed this on the Committee, the City Council's ban on the use of the Square for demonstrations was also important. The agitation was continued by the Unemployed Workers Committee with H. Armour[4] as principal speaker using the Forward van[5]. M'Ateer claimed responsibility for trying to revive the agitation on May 23 1909 with a Glasgow Green meeting to appoint a deputation to the Distress Committee. He accompanied the deputation on May 25 and asked the Distress Committee to use the Council's Common Good fund for the men at Placerigg. The following month he tried to repeat the storming of the City Council, but the unemployed with him didn't follow and he alone was summonsed[6].

1. After Boal's defeat on September 27 1908 "almost every socialist meeting was molested" the next week. On October 4 the SLP's meeting began when the Clarion Scouts finished with thousands of defenders moving from one to the other. On Tuesday October 6 1908 a socialist free speech demonstration in Whiteinch was attacked with "iron bolts, lead piping, clubs etc., but their most formidable weapon was their thick heads which were used as battering rams". While the SLP did not join in the unemployed agitation it was deeply involved in and benefited from the "Free speech" campaign. See The Socialist, November 1908.
2. M'Ateer's account in Forward, July 31 1909.
3. Forward, November 7 1908.
4. Formerly SDP organiser.
5. Forward, July 31 1909.
6. Ibid.

Although it only lasted a few months, the 1908 unemployed agitation was a turning point in Glasgow. It created significant disillusionment among the skilled Liberal working men with the Liberal Government; it brought the skilled and unskilled section of the trade union movement together. It brought about the co-operation of the ILP and the Trades Council in the official Unemployed Workmen's Committee encouraging trends towards permanent co-operation[1]. It united the socialist groups and socialist Protestants and socialist Catholics in a free speech campaign against Boal and the Orangemen. And it showed that the ILP was capable of uniting the different wings of the Labour Movement in a way the SDP was not.

1. Forward, September 12 1908, carried a letter suggesting that the ILP and Trades Council should form a joint Workers' Electoral Committee before the 1908 municipal elections.

The ILP and the Trade Union Movement

The Forward played an important role in the 1908 unemployed agitation. It had always encouraged the organisation of the unskilled and had particularly praised any contingents of unskilled workers turning out on demonstrations[1]. In its second issue[2] John F. Armour wrote an article on the boilermakers' strike which pleaded for the formation of a labourer's union, and Hugh Lyon, ex-iron molder now General Secretary of the Scottish Carters' Association, wrote about his union's growth[3]. A month later Forward discussed "Industrial Unionism" and the unification of the trade societies[4].

In 1907 Forward was more concerned with women's suffrage and Belfast, and in 1908 with unemployment than it was with the trade union movement. But as soon as the Larkin case became prominent in 1909 they leapt to his support and opened a defence fund[5].

Many individual ILP members were organisers of Glasgow's unskilled workers[6] and were also associated with the Glasgow Trades

1. See Forward, July 4 1908.
2. Forward, October 20 1906.
3. Forward, October 20 1906: The carters grew from 300 to 3000 members between 1902 and 1906.
4. Forward, November 17 1906.
5. Forward, October 2, 9, 16, November 20 1909. On June 27 1908, Forward had reported the presentation of an illustrated address to James Larkin by the Belfast dockers including a list of which trade union officials and bodies didn't attend.
6. The two most notable were George Kerr of the Workers' Union and Emmanuel Shinwell, originally from the Tailors Union, who organised the seamen.

Council[1]. But the ILP did not discuss the work of the Glasgow Trades Council in their committee. It left the Trades Council, a parliament of the skilled workers, to organise the unskilled, confident there was a strong minority among the Lib-Lab trade unionists who would vote ILP and that the Trades Council would eventually adopt municipal socialism and support all ILP candidates. Forward rarely commented on the affairs of the skilled workers' unions[2] and maintained the Liberal 'division of powers' between the economic and the political sphere until the First World War[3].

The ILP inherited this Liberal 'separation of powers' in a different way than the SLP or SDF/SDP. In the SLP the 'separation' appeared as an obsessive regard for workshop agitation - all else was dismissed as mere propaganda. The SDF/SDP demonstrated the other half of the 'separation of powers'. It was exclusively concerned with electoral activity and activity among the unorganised and unemployed (until the 1911 strike wave). In the ILP the pattern was that of the craft trade unionists of the 1880s: Liberal in politics and trade unionist in the Trades Council. ILP members were part of an electoral machine organised around a municipal programme and which rarely discussed industrial struggles; they were also

1.. Like George Carson, Trades Council Secretary.

2. The comments during the boilermakers' strike that they should have voted Labour were rare (Forward, December 1 1906) until the anti-war agitation of the war years.

3. In 1916 there was a formal understanding between the ILP and the Glasgow Trades Council.

members of their craft trade unions and of the Glasgow Trades Council. Politically they were ILP members and socialist propagandists; industrially they were craft trade unionists and supporters of the Labour Party.

Despite this division, the ILP, like John Maclean of the BSP, recognised the Miners Union as the fulcrum of Labour politics. It had the earliest working men representatives in Parliament.

Wheatley, a former miner, was Councillor for Shettleston. His pamphlet, "Miners, Mines and Misery", appeared in 1908 and was reviewed in Forward[1].

The ILP did not, however, extend this recognition of the miners' importance to an agitational role on industrial issues. The ILP were organisers of electoral activity and Wheatley was ultimately to make his main area of work the housing agitation on Glasgow Town Council[2].

1. Forward, January 25 1908.
2. The membership of the ILP of several left-wing miners' leaders like Smillie meant that the right-wing union officials like J. O'Connor Kessack and Alex Turner appeared as exceptions. This strengthened the belief that all working class organisations could evolve in a Labour direction.

Growth

In 1908 and 1909 the socialist and Labour movements grew in strength. 1908 saw the largest May Day demonstration up to that time[1], and it was surpassed in 1909 when 30,000 demonstrated at Glasgow Green[2]. While the radical tradition of the Glasgow Labour movement encouraged the development of the most left-wing ILP District in Britain, the 1909 ILP Conference showed it was not prepared to challenge the leadership of either the ILP or the Labour Party.

The Liberal-Labour Party electoral alliance of 1906 had not led to the formation of an Irish/Labour bloc in Parliament as the left of the UIL and the Labour Party had hoped. Instead it had led to the Labour MPs supporting the Liberal Government and relying on the support of backbench Liberal MPs to win Labour's proposals. Victor Grayson, elected as an Independent Socialist in 1907, had therefore emerged as the focus of discontent with the performance of the Parliamentary Labour Party. The question of the Labour Alliance was therefore debated throughout 1908 and it came to the fore at the April 1909 ILP Conference.

The vote on the key question, "Shall we withdraw from the Labour Party?" was decisive: 378 to 8 to stay in[3]. But the left-right divisions within the ILP were a lot sharper on three related questions: whether ILP candidates could describe themselves as

1. Forward, May 9 1908.
2. Forward, May 8 1909. These demonstrations occurred on the first Sunday in May. After 1909 the May Day marches remained the same size: 1912 and 1913 were reported as also having 30,000 demonstrators.
3. Forward, April 17 1909. Tom Johnston reported: "Most delegates seemed secretly to be of John Wheatley's opinion that 'As a pious opinion it's (leaving the Labour Alliance) right enough, but we'd better hold on just now lest worse befall us. It's the only weapon we've got'".

"Socialist and Labour"[1], on a resolution expressing satisfaction with the last year's work of the Labour Party[2], and whether Grayson's salary should be withdrawn[3]. On these questions the Glasgow ILP were on the left. But, sharing as they did with Keir Hardie[4], a common radical Liberal heritage and an evolutionary view of the development of municipal and state socialism, they also bowed to the dictates of parliamentary procedure, and the basic terms of the Labour Alliance.

The embodiment within the Glasgow ILP of a long-standing radical Liberal tradition was perhaps most clearly evident in its support for the revival of activist groups on the land question[5]. In 1909 the Highland Land League was founded, and Tom Johnston became Vice-President to a long-standing Liberal President[6]. The Highland

1. Ibid. The Executive opposed this proposal as a threat to the Labour Alliance and it was defeated 244 to 136.
2. Forward, April 17 1909. 123 votes were cast against.
3. Ibid. This proposal from the Executive was overwhelmingly rejected (332 to 64) and Hardie, Glasier, Snowden and MacDonald all resigned from the Executive in protest at this rebuff.
4. Hardie's speech to the Conference summed up the Glasgow ILP's own relationship to radical Liberalism: "He commenced by saying if it was too much to ask of our society that every child should have food, every strong person work, every old person comfort, and every person a home worthy of the name. Thirty years ago a moral 'furore' was raised by the Midlothian campaign, but today it was the Socialist campaign that raised that furore. He next dealt with the Protectionists' bogey and the Territorial Army Scheme, which had done more to destroy the old ideals of Liberalism than any other measure ever affected. Radicalism in the old days stood for political rights, but today one half of the nation were appealing to the Government to have the same rights as men enjoy. The same spirit which led our forebears to throw off the yoke of fedualism is leading us to throw off the yoke of capitalism". Ibid.
5. Forward, May 2 1908 refers approvingly to the Highland Crofters' and Cottars' Association formed 18 months earlier.
6. Dr. Gavin Brown Clarke had been MP for Caithnessshire from 1885 "until the South African war farce set in". See Forward, September 18 1909.

Land League was set up to support the Lewis crofters against their landlord, Major Matheson, and the crofting squatters at Dalbeg[1]. It had a regular column in Forward from September 1909 when it made its debut with its own platform at the great 'Budget' demonstration in Glasgow and the three existing crofter organisations all agreed to affiliate to it so secure better representation in Parliament[2].

The 1909 'Budget' demonstration in Glasgow demonstrated the hold Liberal commonsense thought still had. It was the last major demonstration in the tradition of 1832, 1867 and 1884 and involved both the trades societies and the friendly societies. 40,000 marched and 100,000 attended the meeting on Glasgow Green[3]. The Glasgow Herald reported:

> "The demonstration reflected many causes. Liberals and Socialists, Home Rulers, Irish and Scottish, co-operators, and temperance reformers were in the ranks of the procession, the banners of each section emblazoned with the shibboleths of their party...
>
> There was a note of menace in the procession. Chiefly it was sounded against landlordism. The sarcastic comments on the banners were in the true democratic vein, direct rather than subtle. Thus: 'The dirge of the Duke: I have had to stop my charities, sack my gardeners and cut off my football subscriptions'. On another banner was inscribed the peremptory words, 'Hands off, Lords'. Another inscription was comprehensive as well as peremptory. 'Pass the Budget. End the House of Lords. Home Rule all round'." 4

1. Forward, July 31, September 18 1909. Inspired by the Liberal agitation for the Smallholdings Bill, some crofters demanded a 'Bill for the Crofters' and squatted around Dalbeg.
2. Glasgow Herald, September 20 1909.
3. Ibid: "The demonstration, which obviously entailed heavy labour, was organised by a committee representing the advanced political parties of the city and trade and friendly societies... There was a great display of banners including some that had been borne in the Reform demonstration of 1832".
4. Glasgow Herald, September 20 1909.

The essence of the 'Budget' demonstration in Glasgow was thus the attack on the landlords and the House of Lords. Unlike the situation in Lancashire[1], in Glasgow the resolutions passed barely dealt with the social reform programme. That which was carried at each of the 11 platforms in Glasgow Green was about the Land question and the taxation of land values[2]. Three of the platforms, however, were occupied by the labour movement[3] and Glasgow labour strongly challenged the still dominant Liberalism. Forward reported:

> "There is still much talk in Glasgow about the 'ructions' at some of the platforms between Socialist and Whig speakers, but a careful enquiry shows that these stories are largely mythical. Of course the Socialist speakers 'went their mile' (and without them the demonstration would have been a fizzle) but any differences of opinion were usually thrashed out afterwards and not on the platform. The resolution spoke of 'all socially created wealth' and the Socialist speakers were quite right in showing that Land Taxation would not solve the social question, and that there was more socially created wealth than what lay in the land" 4

1. P.F. Clarke, op cit, p.399 has argued that the revival of Liberalism in Lancashire was due to the 'New Liberalism' of Lloyd George's social reform programme.
2. "That this meeting heartily welcomes the important provisions contained in the Budget for axing monopolies and socially created wealth,and particularly for securing a complete valuation of all land in the United Kingdom, holding this to be essential to any policy of Land and social reform. It further hopes that the Government will firmly resist any mutilation of their proposals dictated by selfish interests, and will seek an early opportunity for so extending them as to secure the best use of the land which must result in increased employment, better housing for the people and greater prosperity for our national industries". See Glasgow Herald, September 20 1909.
3. Platform Two by the Glasgow Trades Council and the Labour Party; Platform four by the ILP; platform 10 by the Highland Land League with G.B. Clarke and Tom Johnston speaking. Platform 11 was an innovation - the Ladies Platform. Ibid.
4. Forward, September 25 1909.

Even on the land question, however,the retreat of the radicals within the Liberal Party to the sole argument of land taxation[1], opened the ranks of the land activists to socialist arguments and turned them towards the Labour Party[2].

In Scotland the election campaigns of 1909 and 1910 were fought on the questions of the land, land taxation and the House of Lords - not on social reform or 'New Liberalism'. Thus the commonsense appealed to was the old Liberalism, a Liberalism rent with the contradictions of the Liberal administration.

Clarke's thesis that the Liberal Party could have become the party of progress instead of the Labour Party does not fit the West of Scotland[3]. It was the appeal to the old Liberal commonsense that won the 1906 election on the question of Free Trade, and in Glasgow it was a similar appeal on land and the House of Lords which helped win the two elections of 1910. But this commonsense could not properly grasp the problems of unemployment[4], poverty[5] and industrial unrest. It was this failure which nourished Glasgow's Labourism.

1. It is on the Liberal platforms at the 'Budget' demonstration that John Ferguson and his single tax campaign are referred to. See Glasgow Herald, September 20 1909.
2. Even before the 'Budget' demonstration, the Reverend Malcolm McCallum, a Liberal and long-time supporter of the crofters, argued: "The Liberal lairds had captured the Highlands, and we can now only look to the Labour Party". See Forward, September 25 1909.
3. This could be because Scotland's long Liberal tradition made it an exception, and because of the special significance of the land question; or Lancashire may have been the exception since it had been Tory before the 1906 Free Trade election.
4. Battersby, for example, was accused of being a "socialist" because he supported the demand that part of the Tramway surplus should be used to relieve unemployment, advocated by Labour members of Glasgow Town Council.
5. The Charity Organisation Society, for example, was split over whether it should support the feeding of necessitous school children. See Forward, January 25 1908.

Liverpool before 1910

The Glasgow Forward once described the Belfast war cry as 'Social Reform but no Socialism'[1]. This also summed up the attitude in Liverpool of both the Tory Democrats and the Irish Nationalists, whose commonsense understanding of the world overlapped at certain points.

Before 1910 the most significant period for the development of the Liverpool Labour movement was not the period from 1906 under the Liberals, but was before 1906 under the Tory Government. Even under a Tory Government, however, the Liverpool socialist movement was isolated from the mass of workers and developed a labourist ideology. Only with a Liberal revival in 1904 and 1905 did the Labour movement achieve any municipal electoral success before 1911. At the same time an extreme Protestantism developed, leading to a more clearly defined Tory Democracy. In the period 1906-10, therefore, a contradictory development took place with this extreme Protestantism on one side clashing with an increasingly self-confident Catholic minority on the other. In this clash the major gains of the Liverpool Labour movement could only be in terms of trade union organisation within the two communities: the Protestant carters established a closed shop while from 1908 George Milligan began to secretly organise the Catholic dockers of the North-End into the NUDL.

The long years of Tory rule (1895-1906) created problems for Tory Democracy in Liverpool. For Liverpool Tories, the Government was neither Protestant nor democratic enough, and this led to schisms in its ranks. One observer commented that the Conservative Working-men's Association needed an occasional incident "to translate" the

1. Forward January 18 1908.

aggressive religious antipathies into thumping electoral majorities[1]. In 1899, Austin Taylor brought in the Church Discipline Bill to put down "Romanish practices", and it was on this question that Alderman Salvidge finally gained control of the Conservative party over the "currant jelly" section[2].

In December 1899, the Chairman of Liverpool Constitutional Association, Sir Edward Lawrence, resigned and recommended Lord Stanley as his successor. Stanley agreed with everything the Constitutional Association and Working Men's Association stood for, "save that one question"[3]. As a Government whip, Stanley had "told against the (Church Discipline) Bill" and Taylor argued that "Lord Stanley's name should have been placed before the Working Men's Association" first. The issue at stake was who ran the Constitutional Association. Lawrence replied:

> "... if Mr. Taylor's proposal were carried out, the name of a chairman would have to be submitted to the Orange Order and the Primrose League, which like the Working Men's Association, were affiliated bodies, and had their representatives on that executive committee. It was quite impossible for that association to send to either of these affiliated bodies notices of what was proposed to be done"4.

Sir Thomas Hughes also supported Lord Stanley. But the Grand Master of the Orange Order, Isaac Wilson, supported the amendment because "judging from the speeches of Lord Stanley, they as Protestants could not support him"[5].

Alderman Salvidge spoke next demonstrating how removed Liverpool Tory Democracy was from any form of deferential Conservatism:

1. B. Whittingham-Jones, White, Orange and Green , op cit p.47
2. Ibid. p.47-49.
3. Liverpool Daily Post, December 5 1899
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.

> "If by Lord Stanley's vote in the House of Commons he opposed the sentiments of the people, how could he lead Protestant Liverpool?...
>
> Why should they go outside simply because the man was the son of Lord Derby (cries of 'No, No'). They were very fond of Lord Derby who was president of the Working Men's Conservative Association. He believed that there would be a protest throughout the length and breadth of Liverpool if Lord Stanley was elected" 1.

The issue was not simply Protestantism[2] but also whether the working men of Liverpool were just Conservative voting fodder or could they impose their ideology on their party. At the Constitutional Association meeting one Councillor pointed out that as Government Whip, Lord Stanley had to support Government policy. But this was precisely what the Conservative Working Men objected to. As Salvidge said,

> "Did it mean that the Government Whip was to whip the Protestants into line in Liverpool (cries of 'Never' and 'They would have a job')?" 3

The amendment to delete Lord Stanley's name was defeated both at the Constitutional Association and at the Board of Management[4].

Austin Taylor warned at this latter meeting of other issues on which Liverpool MPs might oppose the Government and asked,

> "When the Government Whip became leader of the Conservative Party in Liverpool where was the independent action to come in?" 5.

1. Liverpool Daily Post, December 5 1899
2. Of course it clearly was also an argument about Protestantism. Mr. J. Thompson, Secretary of the Constitutional Association was reported as having said to the Rev. Theodore Howard, "We will Kill this infernal Protestantism": a remark he had some difficulty in explaining away. See also Liverpool Daily Post, December 12 1899.
3. Liverpool Daily Post, December 5 1899.
4. Liverpool Daily Post, December 5, 12 1899: At the Constitutional Association Executive the amendment was lost 41 to 13; Salvidge's proposal to defer the decision for a month was defeated 36-18. At the Board of Management meeting the amendment was lost 105 to 42.
5. Liverpool Daily Post, December 12 1899. Two other issues on which Taylor said they had defied the Government were the Light Dues Bill and the Telephone Bill.

For the Tory leaders of Liverpool, the CWMA was a double embarassment at this time. It was attempting to hold them to the policies of Liverpool working men as well as to extreme Protestantism. In 1899/1900 the question of Irish Home Rule had gone away and it appeared that the Conservatives could have a working arrangement, or at least a neutral relationship, with the Liverpool Catholics[1]. For the first time ever, St. Patrick's Day 1900 was celebrated 'officially' with the green flag flying over the Town Hall:

> "Time was when the Town Hall would have been pulled down had the Irish flag - pure and simple, yet loyal to the core - been seen there. On Saturday, it was suspended alike in peace, in honour and in love. The Lord Mayor of Liverpool, like the Lord Mayor of London had accorded this honour to the flag, and it was well deserved"2.

The occasion was the engagement of the 5th Irish Volunteers at Ladysmith, and the celebrations of the relief of Ladysmith were some of the few which occurred in Liverpool without sectarian skirmishes[3].

1. Liverpool Daily Post, March 26 1900 reported the resolution carried by a demonstration of the Liverpool Irish celebrating the reunion of Redmond, O'Connor and Healey after the ten year Parnellite split: "That we, the Irishmen of Liverpool, in public meeting assembled heartily congratulate the Irish Parliamentary Party on the reunion of its members, renew our confidence in the Irish leaders and representatives, pledge ourselves to hold aloof from all association or connection with the English political parties (applause)..." "The speaker (Austin Harford) expressed the hope that Liverpool Irishmen would have nothing to do with the English Liberal, Radical or Conservative parties, and that the ranks of Irish Nationalists would keep free from the enervating influences of Town Hall socialism. (Applause)". The Conservatives hoped to build on this turn from the Liberals and the socialists.
2. Liverpool Daily Post, March 19 1900.
3. Following the example of the Queen, many wore the shamrock. "Policemen wore it, the Head Constable sported it; Conservatives donned it; Liberals displayed it! It was everywhere - the symbolic idol and ideal of the day." See ibid. Mr. T.M. Healey told an Irish political unity meeting soon afterwards, "For the first time Ireland had become a fashion. Had they ever hoped to see the green flag floating over the Liverpool Town Hall, or read the message of congratulation to "my brave Irish soldiers " (laughter). Irish had asked for bread and been given a plant (laughter). See Liverpool Daily Post, March 26 1900

Not for the last time the premature assumption was made that sectarian strife in Liverpool was a thing of the past[1]. In this situation, George Wise, a Protestant minister, stepped up his campaign against religious ritual inside the Church of England which he had begun in 1898[2]. In April 1900 he led a procession between the churches of St. Margaret's, Anfield, St. John the Baptist's, Truebrook, and the Church of the Advent, Anfield. At each church an address was made and resolutions were passed congratulating the Reverend Dr. Chevasse on his appointment as Bishop Ryle's successor, hoping he would,

> "exercise his episcopal authority and eliminate from our Churches the blasphemous sacrifice of the Mass and the abominable confessional and further trusts that Dr. Chevasse will without delay put an end to the ceremonial use of incense and portable lights as now practised by the Rev. Father Underhill, Toxteth, and the Rev. Father Brookman, Truebrook". 3

The intimidation was successful[4], and in November 1900 while Liverpool prepared to give a hero's welcome to the returning Irish

1. The Liverpool Daily Post, March 19 1900 wrote of an Irish patriot looking at the flag with a tear in his eye, and saying "Be jabers... Then his heart filled up - there was a lump in his throat and a tear in his eye, and he departed. He was thinking of the days that have been and are now no more".
2. In 1898 Wise founded the British Protestant Union, the same year as John Kensit founded the Protestant Truth Society. Wise's 1900 campaign was backed by Bishop Ryle and Austin Taylor's father, Archdeacon Taylor, among others.
3. Liverpool Daily Post & Mercury, April 14 1900.
4. Whereas the Vicar of St. Margaret's had previously held yearly 'Way of the Cross' processions, in 1900 the procession did not venture outside the Church. See R.F. Henderson, George Wise of Liverpool. Protestant Stalwart True, Imprisoned for the Gospel's sake, n.d.

Volunteers[1], George Wise received 107,065 votes in the School Board elections - meaning there were at least 7,000 'plumpers', voters who cast all their votes for him[2].

In 1901 Wise broadened his anti-ritual campaign to an open attack on the Roman Catholic Church. In May he began a series of open air meetings in different parts of the city,

> "... at which his ostensible object was at first to protest against Ritualistic practice in the Established Church, but as a rule his arguments seemed to be based upon abuse and ridicule of certain articles of the Roman Catholic Faith" 3.

There were minor disorders at several meetings and Wise was bound over to keep the peace. In July, however, he advertised a series of 'Protestant Crusade' meetings which ended in a confrontation at St. Domingo's pit:

> "... It was here that on the fourth of October the police had the greatest difficulty in preventing an encounter between Mr. Wise's followers and a crowd of Roman Catholics, who assemble in response to a handbill, which called upon them to do so as a protest against the insults and calumnies thrown at their religion" 4.

1. Liverpool Daily Post & Mercury, November 3 1900.
2. Ibid. November 17 1900. Six Church candidates, four Catholic and four non-sectarian candidates were elected. Wise was the only candidate standing as a "Protestant" and it is likely his vote kept the Church candidate in the South-End out. Out of the 50,000 voters only 6,000 distributed their votes between the parties, indicating the strength of party/religious organisation. The Labour candidate mobilised 1,400 'plumpers', the Catholics 14,000, the Church 13,000; and the non-sectarian candidates approximately 11,000.
3. City of Liverpool, "Proceedings of the Council, 1902-3", Head Constable's report to the Watch Committee, p.1161.
4. City of Liverpool, "Proceedings of the Council, 1902-3", Head Constable's report to the Watch Committee, p.1162.

For this Wise was arrested and subsequently bound over for six months. He appealed unsuccessfully although F.E. Smith defended him on the grounds there was no unlawful obstruction of the streets and that the words used were not insulting[1]. In February and March 1903 Wise wrote to the Watch Committee demanding the right to use St. Domingo's pit for open air meetings, stating it was "Corporation property and is situated in a pronounced Protestant district"[2].

The agitation resulted in the different Protestant groups forming a Protestant Electoral Alliance, and in the 1903 municipal elections, Wise was returned for Kirkdale, two other Protestants were also elected and one was defeated by just one vote[3]. Wise only served one term because it was discovered that as a full-time Minister of religion he was not eligible for nomination.

The Protestant Electoral Federation had a list of questions they put to Tory candidates. The first was on the allocation of suitable sites for open air meetings. The second was:

1. Wise's words were: "They (the police) have kept off the lambs of Rome. I call them lambs; do you? No, because they are fleeced. Jesus said, "Feed my sheep" but the revised version ought to read, "Fleece my sheep"... "They (the priests) waste their lives with harlots; they rob the poor to feed their own children; they are incarnate devils; the Saints ought to know what they are - I don't. Your mass is gambled away. They live upon you, and you know it. No man likes whiskey more than they. The monks in monasteries were living lives of devils. The Monks and Nuns live together in impurity...
   "Though the priest should outrage your daughter no secular power must punish him..." etc. etc. ibid. p.1163. For the appeal see: Liverpool Daily Post & Mercury, November 21 1901.
2. Ibid, p. 1167.
3. R.F. Henderson, op cit, p.12.

> "Will you upon every possible occasion protect and serve the interests in the City Council by discountenancing and resisting any undue attempt to put into employment, place or power Romanists to the exclusion of Protestant candidates?" 1 (my emphasis, JS)

Others were the protection of Protestant free speech from "mob violence", on the provision of Protestant schools in all areas so no Protestant had to send his child to a "Roman Catholic or Ritualistic School"; and lastly about supporting Protestant interests "irrespective of party ties"[2].

Yet the concerns of the Liverpool Protestant Working man were not solely evangelical Protestantism or about Protestant jobs on the Town Council. They were also about the policies the Government were pursuing - and not merely the exemption of convents from the Laundries Inspection Act, or the 1902 Education Act's religious provisions and its attitude to the Church Discipline Bill[3]. They were also about the Government's Irish policy.

With the fragmentation of the Irish party over Parnell and Gladstone's failure to provide Irish Home Rule, the Liberals had retreated to a policy of piecemeal reform in Ireland which led to the breakdown of the Liberal-Irish alliance. But the post-Boer war Tory Government's policies appeared very similar: a Liberal Roman Catholic was appointed Under-Secretary for Ireland; their land reform measures were resented by Protestants; and they only retreated from a Catholic University at the last moment[4].

1. Protestant Searchlight, August 1 1903. Quoted in A. Shallice, "Orange and Green and militancy: Sectarianism and working class politics in Liverpool, 1900-1914", North West Labour History Society Bulletin, 6, 1979-80, p.18.
2. Ibid.
3. A. Shallice, ibid, p.17
4. C. Petrie, Scenes of Edwardian Life , Eyre and Spottiswoode (1965) p.138-146.

At this point in the continuing Conservative/Protestant conflict, J.W.T. Morrisey, Elective City Council Auditor[1] - the first Labour man to have any appointment on the Council - disclosed the expense sheets covering councillors' inspections of municipal works[2]. Their scale caused a scandal. Wise's crusades were strongly linked to Temperance and these disclosures exacerbated Conservative/Protestant relations still further. But the Liberals, the party of 'good civic government', also gained from the disclosures and the total disarray of the Tory Party in the City Council.

In 1904, the worst year of depression before 1908, all the contradictions of Tory Democracy's commonsense came to the surface. Liberal support began to grow in the City leading the Bishop of Liverpool to launch an attack on Unitarianism, the dominant religion among the Liberals:

> "What was needed was that the children of the nation should be saved from the superstitions of Rome and from the darkness of Unitarianism" 3.

1. The Corporation's accounts were audited annually by the Mayor's auditor and two elective auditors who were both qualified and were not members of the City Council.
2. Morrissey concluded: "The average City Councillor is by no means a temperate person where alcoholic liquors are concerned, for I suppose we must in all charity assume that this is the average normal consumption of these people, and not especially so on this occasion, because it comes to them free at the expense of the ratepayer. And yet I think I may safely hazard the opinion that some of these bibulous individuals have, at certain times, on public platforms, and in the public Press, fulminated in eloquent language upon the moral depravity of those working men who are in the habit of spending on average a few coppers per day in drink. Is it possible to conceive of these people as representatives of Liverpool's working class electors; when we find them consuming £1 4s worth each of drink and tobacco in one day..." See Liverpool Echo, October 12 1904.
3. Liverpool Echo, February 5 1904.

When challenged, the Bishop explained that he who denies God as the head of Lord Jesus Christ is "dark", although he distinguished between Unitarianism and the individuals in it who are Christians in the true sense[1].

1. Ibid.

The Liberal and Labour Revival 1904-5

Between 1898 and 1905, the Liverpool labour movement stagnated by comparison with the years between 1889 and 1893. The remnants of socialist organisation remained, but were largely centred on Kensington. In 1895 the ILP Club moved to 65a, Kensington (next door to the Liverpool Working Men's Conservative Association), and became the centre for the ILP, the Socialist Brass Band, and later the Clarion Scouts. Increasingly the Fabians and the ILP became interrelated[1]. The SDF were critical of the ILP, but were praised by the ILP for their fight for freedom of speech at the Edge Hill lamp pitches[2].

In 1900, the Trades Council, ILP, SDF, Fabian Society and Edge Hill and Garston Labour Clubs[3] joined together to set up a Workers' Municipal Committee. The 1901 Taff Vale judgement kindled interest among several skilled trade unions which had previously kept their distance, and in 1903 it became the Labour Representation Council, changing its name to Labour Representation Committee the following year[4]. The immediate effect of the 1904 unemployment was for several unions to reduce their financial support to the LRC, but this did not prevent it from contesting more wards in 1905 than previously[5].

1. Maddock, op cit, p.83 passim.
2. Ibid. Edge Hill was a railwaymen's ward, and the attempt by the authorities to deny the SDF the pitch was clearly serious.
3. R. Baxter, The Liverpool Labour Party, 1918-1963. Oxford D.Phil, 1969, p.11. The Garston and Edge Hill Labour Clubs were set up after a Conference in June 1900. Their importance was that Edge Hill was a railwaymen's area and Garston a dockers and railwaymen's area.
4. R. Baxter, The Liverpool Labour Party, 1918-1963, Oxford D.Phil, 1969, p.11
5. Maddock, op cit, p.190 passim. By 1906 the LRC had 36 organisations affiliated to it representing 20,000 trade unionists.

In ten wards in the 1904 municipal elections there was a straight fight between the Liberals and the Conservatives with the Liberals gaining four[1]. In three wards there was a straight Protestant-Conservative fight, with one Protestant gain[2]. In two wards there was a Liberal-Protestant fight where the Liberals held both; and in St. Anne's there was a Conservative-Independent contest held by the Conservatives.

In Bootle, where the Liberals were the ruling group on the City Council, the Conservative won three seats from them. In Birkenhead, where the Kensitites[3] were standing they came bottom of all five ward polls, and in one ward where two Conservatives were running there was a Liberal gain[4].

On December 12 1904 the Lord Mayor, John Lea, presided at a Conference on Unemployment made up of representatives of the Liverpool and Bootle City Councils, the three Boards of Guardians (Select Vestry, Toxteth, West Derby), the Central Relief Society and trade unions. The town meeting had been suggested by a trade union deputation[5] which had asked for relief in the form of 'productive work'. James Sexton appealed for the expansion of public employment because he didn't believe in the "indiscriminate distribution of charity"[6].

1. Fairfield, Wavertree West, Abercromby, Sefton Park West.
2. St. Domingo.
3. See above, p. 343, footnote 2.
4. Liverpool Echo, November 2 1904.
5. The deputation consisted of James Sexton, C. Rouse (Labour correspondent to the Board of Trade), F. Smith (Shipbuilding and Engineering Federation), W.J. Gerrard (Labour Representation Committeee), Edward Owen (Fabian Society) and the Rev. H.D. Roberts. See Liverpool Echo, December 1 1904.
6. Ibid. Rouse argued there were 14-15,000 unemployed. John Lea was sympathetic and asked them to present a "requisition signed by a large number of influential persons" and then he would call a town meeting.

The Lord Mayor's sympathetic response was part of Tory Democracy's approach to legitimate labour demands. Under trade union pressure the City Council passed the first genuine 'Fair Wage' claims - firms given municipal contracts must pay 'fair' wages - in 1901, although loopholes made it indecisive. In 1903 the Liverpool Trades Council had petitioned the City Council for a revision of this clause. Initially they lost it, but they were successful the following year. When the revisions were accepted in 1904 the Trades Council publicly acknowledged its debt to Councillor Burke and Alderman Salvidge[1].

The conflict between the Protestants and the Tories continued after the 1904 municipal elections[2] and by October 1905 the Tories were clearly nervous about the outcome of both the municipal and the parliamentary elections. But the November municipal elections were disastrous for the Protestant Party: its St. Domingo seat was lost to an 'independent' Conservative[3], and if the Conservatives had not gained this seat they would have been in a minority in the Council chamber[4]. Protestant candidates also failed to win Brockfield from

1. Maddock, op cit, p.177-8.
2. Wise took a libel action against Councillor Colton and ex-Councillor Shelmerdine. They were defended by F.E. Smith on the grounds that abuse was part of a Wise campaign and that it was true Wise made a living out of Protestant crusades. In February 1905 Wise opposed Harmwood Banner MP (the 'Banner' of Everton), and in October challenged him at a Hope Hall meeting as to why he had suddenly rediscovered his Protestantism. See Liverpool Daily Post, October 10 1905.
3. Liverpool Daily Post & Mercury, November 2 1905. Dr. Utting, the Tory Whip on the Council, actually spoke for the Protestant, Ellis Jones, against the Independent Conservative, Whittacker. The Tories had decided to accommodate the Protestants in St. Domingo, though not at Breckford. Whittacker's victory clearly represented another rank and file Conservative revolt against the Tory leadership in Liverpool.
4. The Conservatives also won the new ward of Fazakerley with a mere 560 electors compared to the average of 3,151.

the Conservatives and Sandhills ward against a Liberal and Nationalist candidate[1].

Overall, however, the 1905 municipal elections still constituted a major blow to Liverpool Toryism. They lost five seats to the Liberals, and J.W.T. Morrissey won Kensington ward as a Socialist[2]. Meanwhile, James Sexton won St. Anne's ward from the Liberals, helping to make these municipal elections the high point of Labour organisation in Liverpool before 1911.

In Bootle there was one Conservative gain, and in Birkenhead both the Conservatives and the Protestants gained a seat although both councils remained Liberal. In St. Helens, East of Liverpool, there were three Labour victories. Thus in all the local elections there had been a marked reaction against the existing ruling party in the Council[3].

The crisis years of 1904/1905 under a Tory Government had a much greater impact on the political wing of the Liverpool Labour movement than did the later 1908 unemployment experience under a Liberal Government. It also gave limited encouragement to the later development of trade unionism in Liverpool. The National Union of Dock Labourers, for example, reaffiliated to the Trades Council in 1906 - albeit on a branch-by-branch basis. The NUDL was well organised only in the South end of the docks, and therefore conceded

1. Liverpool Daily Post & Mercury, November 2 1905.
2. Kensington was a three cornered fight between a Conservative, Liberal and a Socialist. At a Conservative meeting a speaker argued: "Kensington wanted a loyal representative; not a man with Wolfe Tone in his name". See Liverpool Daily Post, October 10 1905. The same newspaper explained Morrissey's victory in terms of his exposure of "civic junketing", November 2 1905.
3. Ibid.

in its rule book that men need only "wear the badge" when the branch felt it had the power to do so[1], nevertheless in 1905 there was a brief strike[2]. In 1905 the Mersey Quay and Railway Carters' Union took over the issue of enforcing the badge: its rule book stated that any member refusing to display his badge would be reported to the Executive and "shall be dealt with as the Committee shall from time to time decide"[3]. This enabled the Carters' Union to begin to develop a closed shop - one that in practice was almost entirely Protestant.

The labour movement met the challenge of high unemployment with a delegation to the Lord Mayor[4], the formation of an Unemployed Committee[5] and ten Liverpool men went on a Right to Work march to London[6].

1. The 1901 NUDL Rule Book states, Rule 12: "Each member of the union shall be supplied with a badge. He shall when seeking employment prominently display his badge and on demand of any member of the branch or district produce it for inspection. The enforcing of this clause is not compulsory on branches as in cases where branches are comparatively weak it could not be safely enforced. But where any branch adopts the clause it is then compulsory on the members of such a branch". See P. Carter, "Contributions, Badges and the Liverpool Carters". North West Group for the Study of Labour History. Bulletin No.3. November 1975.

2. E. Taplin, "James Sexton", unpublished paper to the North-West Group for the study of Labour History. June 1980.

3. Rule 19, 1905 Rule Book. Quoted in Carter, op cit, A full-time official argued the later (1910) closed shop was possible because carters spent most of their time off their employer's property.

4. See above, p. 350.

5. Kenneth D. Brown, Labour and Unemployment. David and Charles (1971) p.56, p.164.

6. Liverpool Daily Post & Mercury, February 9 1906.

1906 General Election

Following their successes in the 1904 and 1905 municipal elections, the Liberals were very hopeful for the 1906 General Election. Their candidates were backed by the UIL, which also supported the two LRC candidates (both Catholics), Sexton in West Toxteth and J. Canley in Kirkdale[1]. But while the Conservatives raised the question of Home Rule in the election, the Liverpool Catholics concentrated on the attitude of the Liberal candidates to Catholic schools[2].

The results of the 1906 election were a further shock to Liverpool Conservatism. The Conservatives lost two seats with a business vote[3], held five ("those in which, by a remarkable coincidence, religious bigotry and hooliganism have long been rampant"[4]) and T.P. O'Connor retained the Scotland division[5]. A further shock was then administered by Austin Taylor, MP for East Toxteth, who was returned as a nominee of both political parties because he supported Free Trade, but crossed the House to join the Liberals and resigned from the Liverpool Constitutional Association[6].

1. Liverpool Catholic Herald, January 12 1906.
2. Ibid, January 19 1906. Major Seely, Liberal candidate in Abercromby, was closely questioned because he was a Unionist who had come over on the Free Trade question. With Catholic support his was one of the Liberal gains in Liverpool. See P.F. Clarke, Lancashire and the New Liberalism, Cambridge, 1971, p.283.
3. Abercromby and Exchange.
4. Liverpool Catholic Herald, January 19 1906.
5. Ibid, January 12 1906. O'Connor quoted a circular issued by Redmond and the UIL Executive which said that no Liberal Government would dare interfere with "the sacred right of Catholic Irish parents" on the school question because of its dependence on the Catholic vote.
6. Liverpool Daily Post & Mercury, February 28 1906. A spate of letters followed where Liberals argued he should not stand for re-election since the Liberals had supported him as a Free Trader while the Conservatives had backed him as a Protestant and he was still both. Ibid, March 5 1906.

The crisis of Tory Democracy in Liverpool led not only to a swing to the Liberals in 1904-6, but also to an increase in sectarian agitation within the extreme Protestant community. In March 1906 the Head Constable reported 233 occasions in the previous year when the police had made special provisions to maintain order in the South End; and on 53 occasions the police had used force to disperse crowds[1]. He suggested the situation was as bad as it was in 1901 and blamed,

> "... the exploitation of sectarian bigotry to private objects, direct or indirect pecuniary gains, or the satisfaction of personal vanity" 2.

It wasn't just the Protestants who were now taking the offensive. With the massive Liberal majority of 1906, the Catholic community in Liverpool gained confidence. On the St. Patrick's day celebration in 1906 the Irish National Foresters' Sunday Church Parade was followed by a "rabble" which left the route to attack George Wise's tabernacle after some Orange provocation[3].

The Conservative hold in 1906 in Liverpool had been maintained as a result of Protestantism. But it was not merely in Liverpool that the Conservatives raised the Home Rule issue. The 'Home Rule-Rome Rule' slogan was raised by many constituency parties losing the arguments on Tariff Reform[4]. This led sections of the Liberal Party

1. Ibid, March 6 1906.
2. Ibid.
3. Liverpool Catholic Herald, March 23 1906. The Orange retaliated by picking off people wearing green. The Irish National Foresters turned out in full regalia at both UIL and Catholic meetings, their appearance frequently provoking Orange-Green clashes. The Irish National Foresters grew by 475 between 1901 and 1904; but in 1905 they added 836 members nearly doubling their size to 1,870. See ibid, January 19 1906.
4. P.F. Clarke, op cit, p.372-3

to retreat altogether from any commitment on Irish Home Rule:

> "Mr. Asquith said that as to Home Rule, the pantomime season was on and goblins were in fashion, and the Conservatives were in desperate need of a diversion. To attempt to utilise a majority obtained for Free Trade by promoting and passing a Home Rule Bill would be politically dishonest... Was ever cant more shallow or claptrap more hollow than to talk of independent Home Rule by instalments"[1].

The UIL reacted to these statements by recognising Labour candidates;

not only were they in a pact with the Liberals but they were sounder on Home Rule[2].

After the landslide Liberal victory, Charles Diamond wrote an open letter to Redmond that appeared in the Liverpool Catholic Herald[3] drawing the conclusion that Catholicism had benefited through its support for 'progress':

> "Irishmen and Catholics in Great Britain have seen what has happened to the Catholic Church in other countries, where she has been unfortunately led by narrow and unwise persons to take a stand against anything in the shape of popular freedom and social and political progress. They are thankful that today they do not find themselves beaten and bankrupt politically, as they would have been had they banded themselves with Toryism and all the forces of corruption and reaction in this country"

The same issue carried an article by James J. O'Kelly, MP, entitled "The Coming of Democracy. Labour's Startling Triumph". This argued for an alliance between Labour and the Irish Party:

1. Liverpool Catholic Herald, January 12 1906, quoting Asquith speaking in Sheffield.
2. The UIL supported Barnes in Glasgow against a Liberal who opposed Home Rule; elsewhere it supported LRC candidates who were not facing Liberals as agreed by the Liberal-LRC electoral pact.
3. January 26 1906. The letter was first published in the Freeman.

> "Numbering at least one hundred and thirty members, the Irish and Labour parties form the nucleus of a truly democratic House of Commons... It should never be forgotten that the Irish Parliamentary Party is also a Labour Party... There are two Irelands - the one mainly agricultural, the other almost wholly industrial. The latter Ireland is to be found in the mines and workshops of Great Britain, and are in as much need of social and political protection as their brothers in Ireland"1.

These arguments followed a leader article criticising Cardinal Logue and Archbishop Walsh for supporting a candidate whom the UIL had repudiated[2].

In Glasgow this attempt by left UIL supporters to raise progressive politics within the Irish Nationalist movement would have been taken for granted. In Liverpool, however, the paper immediately came under attack for carrying "politics" in it[3]. By March and April 1906 it had returned to its role as Church paper, carrying articles on French and Spanish Catholicism, and had abandoned the attempt to play the role of a left-wing UIL paper like the Glasgow Observer.

This retreat was associated with the launching of a massive campaign by the Roman Catholic Church over Birrell's Education Bill[4]. In Liverpool, this campaign was particularly effective because of the

1. O'Kelly also regretted Labour had not been better organised, otherwise "the popular tidal wave which has carried the Liberals into office would have carried two hundred direct representatives of Labour into the House of Commons".
2. T.M. Healey was repudiated for his "treachery and ruffianism" at the time of the Parnell affair. The anti-clerical implications in making such criticisms were obvious. Liverpool Catholic Herald, January 19 1906.
3. Ibid, March 16 1906 carried an article called "The Catholic Press and Politics" defending itself: "Correspondents who know nothing about running Catholic journals never tire of giving advice to Catholic journalists. One of their favourite hobbies is to tell us that Catholic newspapers should have no politics". It adds, they should run their own papers because they are wealthy enough.
4. A very mild measure by Nonconformist standards who wanted the secularisation of education. See S. Koss, "Nonconfirmity in Modern British Politics", Batsford, 1975 p.79-84.

way the local Conservatives had implemented the 1902 Education Act[1]. The attitude of the Tory Council had led to the formation of the Liverpool Catholic School Managers' Association under the chairmanship of Councillor T. Kelly, and by 1906 it was suggested this could be the basis of the reconstruction of the Diocesan Association[2].

The Education Bill was discussed at the 1906 UIL Convention where a resolution about "Catholic interests in elementary schools" was moved. When an objection was raised to the word "Catholic" because the UIL was traditionally open to all denominations and "it would be a great pity to now introduce religious discussion into the organisation"[3], the Liverpool councillor, T. Kelly, replied:

> "Catholic and Irish were synonymous words. He would advise anyone with any particular interest in Catholic education to support and strengthen the United Irish League" 4.

The objection was overruled, and in Liverpool the whole Irish movement was pulled into the Catholic campaign. Demonstrations were held in Liverpool in March 1906 and again after the Bill's Third

1. When the Catholic schools were taken over in June 1903, the managers were asked to continue to pay for their cleaning, heating and lighting. They were to be reimbursed for this, but by January 1906 this had still not happened. When the Council did propose payments they were "to scale" - about which the Government auditor declared: "Under this scale about 50 per cent of the Catholic schools were insufficiently paid". A further proposal cutting the repayments by 1/7th or 2/7ths for the use of the schools by the managers, retrospective to June 1903 was then made. The Council compounded this by being very slow in carrying out repairs and in supplying equipment. See Liverpool Catholic Herald, January 19 1906.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid. June 8 1906.
4. Ibid.

Reading in July[1]. In October there was a monster demonstration of 60,000 organised by the Catholic hierarchy at Belle Vue, Manchester[2], and smaller demonstrations in Liverpool. At one of these - the laying of a parochial hall foundation stone - James Sexton spoke against the Bill with Councillor Kelly[3]. A month later Sexton spoke at a meeting marking T.P. O'Connor's return from America, and while he made only a passing reference to his opposition to the Bill[4], John Dillon devoted his entire speech to attacking it[5].

By the time of the 1906 municipal elections the effect of this massive campaign had been to switch the Nationalist Party's support from the Liberals to the Conservatives. The rest of Lancashire followed suit in 1907 when the Catholic Federation drew up a series of test questions for candidates[6]. This also made an impact on the

1. Ibid, August 3 1906,
2. Ibid, October 19 1906.
3. Ibid, October 26 1906. The major organisations present were the Young Men's Society, the Irish National Foresters and the Catholic Democratic League. Others included the Catholic Truth and the St. Vincent de Paul Societies.
4. Ibid, November 16 1906. Sexton was reported as saying: "John Dillon and he, and every member of their party, Protestant or Catholic - (hear, hear) - stood on the same platform (Renewed cheers)... They should defend the claim of their children to have the same educational rights as other children consistent with their religious convictions". Sexton had earlier been reported as opposing the declaration for secular education passed at the Trade Union Congress: "In the interests of a united Labour movement he felt it was a mistake to introduce the theological question... no member of the Congress... had any right to proclaim that the decision of the Congress on this matter was binding on every member". See ibid, September 14 1906.
5. John Dillon argued only two courses faced the Liberal Party: secularisation - which the country wouldn't stand for; or "fair play to all religions". The meeting was significantly large: 5,000 strong, the hall was filled three hours before the meeting was scheduled to begin. Ibid.
6. B. O'Connell, The Irish Nationalist Party in Liverpool. 1873-1922. University of Liverpool, M.A., p.87-89; Glasgow Observer, November 1907.

Labour vote: in the Kirkdale bye-election in 1907, the LRC candidate, John Hill, polled a much lower vote than before[1], and in the 1908 municipal elections Morrissey lost in Kensington while Sexton retained his seat in St. Anne's.

1. Maddock, op cit, p.199-200.

Liverpool Trades Council

The Liverpool Trades Council attempted to avoid both the Protestant-Catholic divide and the Socialist division within the LRC. Thus when the LRC endorsed a socialist, Nelson Taylor, as candidate for Kensington in 1907, the Trades Council objected[1]. A majority of delegates believed the LRC should not be allied to any political body and 'Labour alone' should remain its programme, while others openly supported the socialists. George Wise entered the debate on the side of the 'non-political' group. In a letter to the Liverpool Daily Post & Mercury he argued:

> "...the absurd blending of Labour with Socialism will defeat the admirable and laudable object of the Labour Party, and will tend to drive the more moderate into the ranks of the historic political parties. Labour should stand alone and independent. Labour should not be the tool in the hands of revolutionary socialism" 2.

Neither the Trades Council nor the Liverpool LRC could, however, justly be accused of "revolutionary socialism" despite ILP involvement in the LRC. They consistently opposed "the importation of foreign paupers"[3] and supported Sexton's opposition to Chinese labour in South Africa[4]. Without a Liberal commonsense to build upon, the ideology of the Trades Council and most LRC delegates was 'more municipalisation plus labour representation'.

1. It threatened to withhold its share of election expenses. See Maddock, op cit, p.197 passim.
2. November 1 1907, quoted in Maddock, op cit, p.198.
3. Souvenir of the Trades Union Congress, Liverpool 1906.
4. Liverpool Daily Post, September 9 1904 for Sexton's first speech at the TUC against Chinese labour being introduced on the Rand. He argued it could occur in Britain despite the Aliens Act. This view is reiterated at the 1906 TUC and in January 1907 by the Liverpool Trades Council. See Liverpool Trades Council, Minutes January 9 1907.

The healing of the Protestant-Conservative conflict that resulted from the tonic of a Liberal Government, and the growing Catholic identity of the Irish community meant the Liverpool labour movement was unable to respond to the 1908 depression with the kind of unification of forces that occurred in Glasgow. The crisis was very severe: in September 1908 an estimate made for the Liverpool Distress Committee suggested 12,350 unemployed of whom 8,000 were dock labourers[1]. This was probably an underestimate[2]. Further, Liverpool's unemployment rose sharply in September 1908 because of the cotton trades lockout[3]. The Liverpool Trades Council's Annual Report described 1908 as "starvation year" - the worst year in memory. Yet the relief measures were worse than elsewhere[4]. The Distress Committee only provided work for 150 at any one time, and a large part of the Lord Mayor's Fund was simply distributed as charity through the Central Relief Society[5].

In September 1908 a hunger march of 1,000 unemployed greeted the launching of the Lord Mayor's Fund. The Liverpool Unemployed

1. The Times, September 25 1908.
2. Central Relief Society enquiries among the large shipping and shipbuilding employers suggested only half normal employment was available. Ibid.
3. To enforce a reduction in wages. Ibid.
4. Ibid, reported: "The measures taken and contemplated in Liverpool differ in some important respects from those in Manchester. They are directed far less to the provision of work and far more to the distribution of charity. It may be that circumstances justify or compel this line of action, but in principle it is less satisfactory".
5. The Times, September 25 1908. The reason for the 'charity emphasis in the Liverpool Distress Committee was the large Liverpool casual labour force. Derby make it clear it was necessary to treat the 'artisan' - who needed help before he sold his house - differently from the casual labourer - who had to be merely saved from total destitution. See Liverpool Daily Post & Mercury, September 23 1908.

Association carried the banner "For God and Humanity"[1] and sent a deputation to the Lord Mayor's Conference, while an alternative deputation demanded the right to work and the maintenance of the unemployed from the municipal exchequer[2].

Unlike Glasgow, both the Trades Council and the ILP in Liverpool were too weak to mount a campaign which could unify all sections of the unemployed. Thus the Trades Council argued for more representatives on the Lord Mayor's Fund[3] and that the City Council should petition Parliament for the passing of the Right to Work Bill. When both were denied it argued instead that distribution of relief should be done through the Trades Council. When this too was rejected, its Unemployment Committee recommended that the Trades Council establish a rival organisation to the Lord Mayor's Fund on the one hand, and on the other that it disassociate itself from the socialist-inspired campaigning efforts and instead run its own processions, demonstrations and petitions[4].

The 1908 crisis pushed Liverpool's labour movement even further onto the defensive.

1. Liverpool Daily Post & Mercury, September 11 1908. The deputation consisted of Pastor Archer, John Walker, John Edmunds, J. Hall and A.W. Whittaker.
2. Ibid. This deputation consisted of Clancy, Benson, Roach and Mrs. Hamilton. "This second body was regarded by the other deputation as mischief makers who represented no-one but themselves".
3. Ibid, September 23 1908. They had one member and wanted three.
4. Maddock, op cit, p.179-180. The former was immediately repudiated as impossible, and the latter attempt quickly died.

Contradictions

From mid-1908 until May 1909 the feeling grew among Liverpool's extreme Protestant element that the Catholics were getting too much of their own way. The Catholic agitation had forced the Liberal Government to retreat on Birrell's Education Bill[1] and McKenna's new Education Bill introduced in February 1908 had a 'contracting-out' clause[2]. The Eucharistic Conference held in London in 1908 and a Eucharistic procession in Liverpool added to the anger.

In May 1909 the Council's Health Committee approved the erection of an altar to be used in connection with celebrations of the 60th year of the Holy Cross Church. Strictly illegal[3], the Orange Order had been assured that the Host would not be carried through the streets of Liverpool, and it cancelled a protest meeting. Yet life size statues of the Madonna and Child were carried and small shrines were erected in the courtways[4].

A month later St. Joseph's Church also celebrated a jubilee, and the Grand Lodge of the Liverpool Province of the Orange Society organised a demonstration an hour earlier for the purpose of "preventing any illegal processions"[5]. The riot of Sunday, June 20 1909 lasted until midnight, by which time 1,000 police were being used and mounted police had charged the 3-4,000 Orange crowd. More

1. Which lapsed at the end of 1907.
2. Koss, op cit, p.80 passim.
3. Under the Roman Catholic Emancipal Act, 1929, which was believed to have been used to prevent the carrying of the Host in London in 1908. In fact, Asquith had reached an agreement with the Archbishop of Westminster that ecclesiastic symbols would not be carried. See Liverpool Daily Post & Mercury, September 14 1908.
4. E. Midwinter, Old Liverpool , David & Charles, 1971, p.180, quoting the 1909 Police Inquiry.
5. E. Midwinter, op cit, p.180. The Protestant crowd made a dash for the Madonna and Child.

than 40 demonstrators were arrested[1]. During the following week there were attacks and counter-attacks every night, and Protestants began moving out of Catholic areas and Catholics left Protestant areas[2]. Carters, largely Protestant and many of them Orange, were attacked on their way home from the docks through Catholic areas, and one died[3].

On Sunday, June 27, Wise wanted to lead a procession of his bible class in protest, but this was banned, incensing the Protestants still further. Wise refused to comply and was arrested[4]. He was finally sentenced to a four month prison term in August 1909, unleashing several months of Orange[5] attacks on Catholic magistrates, councillors and communities[6].

As a result both a Catholic Defence Association and an Orange Defence Association were formed, and sectarian bitterness continued until the end of the year[7]. When Wise submitted himself for the sentence on October 23 a huge demonstration accompanied him to prison[8]; and while he was inside the nuns of Everton convent didn't dare go outside.

1. Ibid. See also A. Shallice, op cit, p.24.
2. Shallice, op cit, p.24. See also Police Inquiry 1909, p.616. 120 families moved in one month out of a predominantly Catholic area around Scotland and Vauxhall Roads.
3. Ibid.
4. Midwinter, op cit, p.180.
5. Wise was an official of the Loyal Orange Order.
6. Liverpool Catholic Herald, August 7 1908, quoted in Shallice, op cit.
7. Police Inquiry, p.565.
8. Ibid, p.522 passim.

Some evidence suggests that the Catholics, at least, discriminated between their targets. William Daniels, a prominent Orangeman, who wrote a threatening letter to the Town Council about the St. Joseph's procession, was warned not to return to work at the Palantice Oil Cake Mills where the workforce was three-quarters Catholic. He didn't[1], and other Protestants working there were left alone.

The Police Inquiry Act 1909 was passed because the Protestants felt they were victimised by the Liverpool Chief Constable. However, the riots and the subsequent inquiry in February 1910, once again stirred up conflict between the 'respectable' Conservatives and the extreme Protestants within the Conservative camp. Many of the witnesses at the Inquiry were from Wise's church or had attended his meetings[2], while letters were read to the Inquiry from prominent Orange businessmen and Conservative councillors disassociating themselves from the riots[3]. The contradictions within Liverpool's Tory Democracy manifested themselves again.

1. Ibid, p.632.
2. Ibid, passim.
3. Ibid, p.402-4.

Chapter 7 The Years of Unrest, 1910-1914

The importance of the period 1910-1914 was that three moments of struggle critical to the development (in Gramsci's argument) of a 'hegemonic' class consciousness were present simultaneously: heroic individual strikes; massive generalised strike waves; and the critical questions of Irish Home Rule and Women's Suffrage. Against this backcloth Chapter Seven considers the contribution these struggles made to the shaping of the local Labour movements and the manner in which the local Labour ideologies and dominant 'commonsense' thought helped fashion and limit the struggles.

In Liverpool there was never an inevitability about the progress of trade union organisation or Labour representation. 1911 was an extraordinary moment which transformed the Labour movement in the city and created a new, alternative strand in commonsense thought without ever replacing the existing commonsenses of Tory Democracy and Irish Nationalism. The whole period from 1909 to 1920 was one of sectarian riots alternating with labour unrest in which no socialist or trade union organisation existed capable of establishing permanent political working class leadership against the Tory caucus, or the Irish Nationalist machine.

The 1911 transport strike followed seemingly contradictory developments: two years of Protestant/Catholic strife, three years of underground trade union activity among the North End Catholic dockers, five years of strong organisation among the Protestant carters, and the survival of a dockers' union among

the South End Protestant dockers. Following the 1908 unemployment, inflation was comparatively high. The dockers wanting the union badge were following the example of the carters whose union badge brought better security of employment and higher wages. The railway workers had job security, what they needed was higher wages. It was the crossing of the uncertainty of unemployment in a period of price inflation with the exhaustion of the old sectarian struggles that produced the cataclysmic reversal from sectarian strife into Labour strife.

In Liverpool, the organisation of the unskilled and casual workers was undertaken by a professional trade union leadership, although this was masked by the involvement of revolutionary syndicalists. These trade union officials were right wing Labourists who were neither integrated into an ongoing local political tradition (such as radical liberalism in Glasgow) nor into the democratic trade union tradition of the old craft societies. Liverpool syndicalism, likewise, was a local response to the weak craft tradition, the apparent inevitability of Tory control of the Council and the possibilities for direction intervention in the struggle by 'professional' activists. But, unlike the right wing trade union officials, the syndicalists failed to root themselves organisationally in the local working class.

In Glasgow, syndicalism took a quite different form: the organised form of the Socialist Labour Party - and it also influenced individuals within the ILP and BSP. However, Glasgow syndicalism also reflected Glasgow's radical liberal/evolutionary

tradition: for all three groups, SLP, ILP and BSP, the industrial struggle was just one aspect of the struggle - parliament was still seen as a focus for socialist propaganda and a final stage in the struggle for socialism. The theory of the cataclysmic general strike was never central, as it was in Liverpool, nor did the Glaswegian syndicalists believe that the socialist transformation would have to be violent.

In Glasgow, by contrast with Liverpool, the strike wave of 1910-1914 did not create the Labour movement. Instead, it created a layer of revolutionary 'good sense' thinkers who developed alongside the leaderships of the ILP and Glasgow Trades Council but did not replace them.

A crucial test for both cities was their response to the Dublin 1913 strike - a generalised transport strike appealing for international solidarity in which women were among the most militant strikers. In Liverpool, after the initial attempt to get solidarity industrial action failed, the 'political' movement ignored the strike, leaving solidarity collections to the trade unions. While in Glasgow although there was an enormous wave of political solidarity, and a massive collection organised through Forward and the ILP there was no industrial solidarity.

By 1914 neither of the two critical problems of the relationship of industrial and political action or of the relationship of the Labour movement to struggles of the Irish or of women were resolved.

A. LIVERPOOL

The situation in Liverpool remained tense because the Irish community were not prepared to accept continuing Protestant aggression and fought back. Under the Liberal Government of 1906-1910, and after 1910 with a Parliament where Irish MPs held the balance of power, they were confident enough to retaliate[1].

The sectarian strife impinged on the Liverpool labour movement and made it easier for several unions to use the 1909 Osborne judgement to cut back their support for the Liverpool LRC[2]. Three ILP candidates were put up in the Parliamentary elections of 1910 and supported by local trade unions and the Trades Council - two in January and one in December[3]. In the municipal elections of November 1910, five candidates were run[4] including Charles Wilson who won in Edge Hill despite being opposed by a Fabian candidate[5].

1. As late as March 1911 a battle took place between the Irish Foresters and the Orangemen. Liverpool Daily Post March 20 1911.
2. Liverpool LRC, 1910 Annual Report: "1910 has not been a favourable year....The Osborne judgement has been an excuse for those who, through indifference or hostility preferred to save their coppers rather than make the trifling sacrifice involved in assisting our movement, with the result that while very few societies entirely defected, many have considerably reduced the amount of their affiliation fees...." Quoted in Maddock, op cit, p.201-2
3. Maddock, op cit, p. 201-2, and footnote p. 202. A.G. Cameron of the National Union of Carpenters and Joiners stood in Kirkdale and James Sexton in West Toxteth (also supported by the Liberals) in January. In December 1910, Thomas McKerrel ran against Kyffin Taylor. They could only afford to fight one seat.
4. In Edge Hill, Kensington, Kirkdale, Low Hill and Walton.
5. Ibid.

The Liverpool Trades Council reflected the attitudes of skilled workers in a town where the majority of workers were semi-skilled, unskilled or casual workers. Thus during the 1910 Dublin brush-makers' lockout, they made a minimal donation of three guineas[1], and they adopted highly contradictory attitudes on the issue of National Insurance. In March 1911, Murphy of the Litho Printers introduced an ASE resolution to the Trades Council :

> "That this meeting of the Liverpool branch of the ASE strongly protests against the intention of the Government to impose a system of State Insurance against the unemployment on the workers of this country, the result (of) which will undermine the autonomy and independence of Trades Unions and compel those employed in regular (work) to provide unemployment relief to those workers whose industries are subject to chronic unemployment and (for) whom the existing Poor Law could be compelled to make adequate provision." [2]

The Trades Council referred this resolution back to the Litho Printers' Society until the Bill was submitted to the House of Commons. At the same time the Trades Council was worried the Labour Exchanges could be used as blacklegging agencies. In July 1910 it passed a resolution demanding that "no vacancies arising from strikes or lockouts" should be accepted by officials of the Labour Exchanges.[3] It was also concerned that workers should be paid at trade union rates. In July 1911 the Labour Exchange sent 60 joiners to Caernarvon and promised them the Liverpool rate. When this wasn't paid, Cottringham moved that the Trades Council withdrew its representatives from the Labour Exchange, and it was pointed out that the carters were refusing to

1. Liverpool Trades Council, Minutes, August 10 1910.
2. Ibid, March 8 1911. The resolution's reference to the Poor Law is indicative of the skilled workers' attitude to the casual and unskilled workers of Liverpool.
3. Liverpool Trades Council, Minutes, July 17 1910.

register at the Labour Exchange.[1] The Trades Council, however, refused to withdraw its delegates and ultimately R. Williams of the Labour Exchange came to speak at the Trades Council which passed a resolution saying National Insurance should be a non-contributory scheme of State aid.[2] The carters, who were not affiliated to the Trades Council, remained a law unto themselves with a tightly-organised Protestant closed shop.[3]

Towards the beginning of 1911, however, there was a small rise in union affiliations to the Liverpool Trades Council of which the Sailors' and Firemen's Union affiliation was the most important.[4] Outside the official Liverpool labour movement (consisting of Trades Council, LRC, ILP and Co-operative Movement), a small new current was

1. Ibid July 12 1910.
2. Maddock, op cit, p.34.
3. The Liverpool carters, the Mersey Quay and Railway Carters' Union used the union button to enforce strict control over their trade. Rule 28 (1910 Rule Book) required all members to wear a badge and fined those reported not wearing it up to five shillings; members who didn't report a non-badge wearer in the same firm within 24 hours could also be fined five shillings. The badges were numbered and recalled every half year. P. Carter, "Contributions, Badges and the Liverpool Carter", North West Society for Labour History Bulletin, 1975 suggests, "Employers assisted to the extent that only union members were hired at the stands, but this was a consequence of union strength rather than negotiated agreements." The carters had clearly succeeded in transforming themselves into a form of Protestant semi-skilled 'labour aristocracy' - their care for their horses was a skill which they demonstrated at the carters' May Day parade, which had the pageantry and the crowds that the Socialist May Day demonstration had in Glasgow. In Liverpool there was no May Day demonstration by the Socialist and Labour forces. Even in 1912 the demonstration consisted of meetings at St. George's Plateau.
4. Liverpool Trades Council, Minutes, November 9 1910. The National Amalgamated Union of Labour also affiliated. See ibid, January 1911.

also developing. Eight Liverpool delegates[1] attended the Conference of the Industrial Syndicalist Education League (ISEL) in November 1910. The syndicalist agitation around Tonypandy was beginning to make an impact in Liverpool and Tom Mann's Industrial Syndicalist was on sale.[2] These small indicators within and outside the official movement heralded the beginning of a short and explosive period of respite from religious sectarian strife.

1. Industrial Syndicalist, December 1910. Quoted in H.R. Hikins, "The Liverpool General Transport Strike, 1911", Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire & Cheshire. 1962, XIV.

2. The Revolutionary Industrialists and International Club of Liverpool were both founded in 1910. Muston, founder of the Revolutionary Industrialists, sold the Industrial Syndicalist. See R. Holton, Syndicalism and its impact in Britain with particular reference to Merseyside, D. Phil, University of Sussex, 1971. See also, R. Holton, British Syndicalism, 1910-1914, Pluto Press, 1977. References will be to the D. Phil which contains more detail.

1911 Transport Strike

The first annual meeting of the Transport Workers' Federation[1] was held in Liverpool between June 1 and June 3. 1911. The night before it began, a 20,000 strong demonstration marched from both ends of the city to St. George's Plateau to listen to speeches from Will Thorne, Sexton, Tillett and Havelock Wilson.[2] Its size was the first significant sign of a shift in the climate of the local labour movement. A resolution was passed urging all transport workers to support the two seamen's unions in their coming dispute.[3]

After the Conference a large, general strike committee was formed including Ton Mann,[4] members of the Trades Council and other transport union delegates, including the carters.[5] The starting date for the official NSFU strike was June 15 but Southampton

1. It was with Tom Mann's encouragement that Ben Tillett circulated the letter calling all the transport unions together. The second issue of the Industrial Syndicalist, August 1910, was devoted to the need for a transport workers' federation. See: ed. G. Brown, The Industrial Syndicalist, Spokesman Books, 1974.

2. Wilson wrote to Tom Mann, "Of course, neither Tillett, Sexton or Anderson are desirous of taking part in such a fight..If they ever come into the fight it will be because they are compelled." Quoted in R. Holton, op. cit, p.312.

3. Ibid. The resolution didn't actually pledge sympathetic action, which was not surprising given Sexton's attitude to Larkin and solidarity struggles.

4. Wilson sent Mann to Liverpool to build a broad strike committee because the Liverpool employers had previously been the centre of resistance to the union and had organised non-unionists from other ports to break strikes there.

5. Tom Mann was President and Frank Pearce of the Cooks and Stewards Secretary of the Strike Committee. The delegates were - ASE: 4; Cooks and Stewards: 2; NUDL: 3 (including Sexton and Milligan); NSFU: 5; MQRCU: 3 (including W.B.Quilliam); Trades Council: 3 (including Murphy); ASRS: 2; South End Coal Heavers: 1; Dock Board Coopers: 1; Operative Bakers:1. Holton,op cit, p.315 states that only Mann, Pearce and one other delegate had any contact with the ISEL.

struck on June 9 and some of the Liverpool seamen on June 14th.[1] Tom Mann immediately brought forward the official start, and on the same day four companies agreed to negotiate with the NSFU. This achievement was a signal to the rest of the seamen to join the strike, forcing rapid settlements on the shipping companies.

When the White Star passenger line refused to settle with its stewards, however, the stewards joined the striking seamen and prevented the ship signing on crew. The strike committee then extended its activities to other unions on the docks and organised 'blacking' of those companies still in dispute with the seamen.[2] When a ship arrived from Glasgow manned partly by non-union firemen, non-union dockers refused to unload her and the struggle spread from being a solidarity issue with the seamen to one of union organisation and rates of pay among the predominantly Catholic dockers in the North End of Liverpool's docks. On June 28 4,000 dockers walked off the docks followed by another 6,000 transport workers of all categories. Those seamen whose companies had already settled then repaid their debt to the dockers by striking all the ships along the entire North End of the docks.[3] What had been a seamen's and stewards' struggle supported officially by the NUDL, largely Protestant South End dockers, and the MQRCU, the Protestant carters, and unofficially by the non-union Catholic dockers in the North End, had become a struggle for

1. The men struck early to avoid being at sea on the official starting date of the strike.
2. On June 26 Mann addressed a carters' meeting which endorsed the NUDL vote not to handle ships where the seamen were still in dispute with the employers. Hikins, op cit, p.174-5.
3. Ibid, passim.

the trade union rights of the North End Catholic dockers.[1]

In 1890 the North End dockers had fought for union recognition "with only the coal heavers to help them",[2] and had been defeated. They faced the great passenger liner companies rather than the small shipping forms of the South End, and required mass action to win. George Milligan, the secretary of the new NUDL No. 12 branch which recruited massively among the North End dockers and soon became the most powerful branch in the union with some 12,000 members, pointed this out in August 1911:

> "The Dockers' Union could be forced on the master porters and stevedores but not on the banded strength of the great Liner companies until a week or two ago."[3]

On the first day of the dockers' strike the big shipping firms agreed to recognise the NUDL but refused to give union rates and conditions. They demanded time to study the dockers' Rule Book. The strike committee agreed to this and despite opposition at meetings in Bankfield Road and Sandhills Lane they eventually got a return to work. Most sections of the port worked normally from July 4 to August 3 when a definite agreement was signed.[4] During this lull there was an enormous expansion of trade union membership among both the dockers and other groups of workers.[5]

1. The North End Dockers wanted "an immediate rise to the Union standard of rates and wages". See George Milligan's article in Transport Worker, August 1911. They were supported, crucially, by the seamen, coal-heavers and by the carters. Milligan referred to the North End carters' delegate on the strike committee, W.H. Jones, as "my staunchest ally during the strenuous times of the strike committee".
2. Transport Worker, August 1911.
3. Ibid.
4. R. Holton, op cit, p. 324-5.
5. Transport Worker, August 1911, reported shore gangs, crane-drivers, tugboatmen joining the Dockers' Union. H. Hikins, op cit, p.182, cites coopers and labourers at a tobacco warehouse, the scalers of Wallasey Ferries, cotton porters, wool warehousemen, brewery workers, oil mill workers and 250 girls at Walton Rubber all joining unions. He also refers to the recruitment of the previously unorganised tramway men in the National Union of Enginemen, Firemen, Mechanical and Electrical Workers.

At the beginning of August the goods porters in the North Docks depot of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway came out on strike. Their stoppage spread rapidly to other Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway workers and to the London and North Western Railway. It then spread to Lime Street and Edge Hill and on to the railway workers in the South End docks. Thus the goods porters at both the Catholic and Protestant ends of the docks were on strike together.

This new strike wave deeply worried the Liverpool establishment.

The Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury reported:

> "It was generally hoped and expected that the pacific settlement of the recent strikes - there have been over a dozen locally within the last six weeks - would put an end to the misunderstandings between Capital and Labour. On Saturday unfortunately there was a recrudescence of the trouble.....
> "Their demand is a fifty-four week, instead of the present sixty hours and an increase of pay of 2s per week for all grades of workers...
> "The position of affairs is being made more complicated by the fact that the men are not being backed up by the Strike Committee."[1]

In fact, by August 8 1911, 4,000 railwaymen were out[2] and the strike committee endorsed their action - despite the official union leadership's refusal - calling for other transport unions to give solidarity[3]. Two days later 11,000 railwaymen were out and 8,000 dockers and carters

1. August 7 1911. The demands of the goods porters on the Cheshire lines who joined the strike included the abolition of the Conciliation Boards, recognition of the union, hours down from 60 to 54 a week and an increase in the minimum wage from 21s to 24s a week. See H. Hikins, op cit, p. 183 passim. The Boards had been widely repudiated by railway workers on Merseyside in July 1911. They were based on the different grades of workers and each Board had half workers and half employers' representatives. The employees on the Boards were not trade unionists, and no strikes were to occur while the Boards met.
2. Ibid.
3. Hikins, op cit, p.185.

were idle supporting the strike committee's 'blacking' call.[1] Following this call the City Magistrates asked the Home Secretary to send in troops; Leeds and Birmingham police were also drafted in.[2] At the same moment the shipping companies repudiated their agreement with the dockers.

On Sunday, August 13 1911 a mass rally of transport workers took place attended by 80,000 strikers, with their wives and families from all over the city. Its size and composition demonstrated how far the unity of the Liverpool Protestant and Catholic dock workers had developed. The Transport Worker reported:

> "Starting from the branch office, Derby Road, at 2 p.m. the north end carters, under Mr. W.H. Jones, marched to meet their comrades, the north end dockers, at Bankhall, in charge of Mr. G. Milligan. The procession then consisting of quite 15,000 men, marched in splendid order to the Carters' Offices, in Scotland Road. There the large and magnificent banner of the Carters' Union, placed lengthways on a lorry drawn by a splendid team of horses, entered the ranks....and at least 4,000 more carters and dockers formed in line, and proceeded south....
>
> "A large number of sailors, firemen, ships' stewards, cooks, butchers, and bakers, engine men, crane men, tram men, railway workers, mill and warehouse workers, canal men, flat men, and in fact every conceivable branch and section of the transport industry fell into the procession, and marched orderly down London Road.
>
> "Brothers Tom Mann, Billal Quilliam, and Thos. Ditchfield, at the head of the procession in front of the band, and the Carters' banner, marched at a slow pace amidst rousing cheers down London Road, the whole of the tramway traffic being suspended at the time in that area"[3]

1. The strike then spread to railwaymen throughout the North West and then nationally until the executive of the national unions were forced to meet and declare an official national strike from August 17.

2. The Magistrates' pretext was that "acts of violence" had been committed. See Home Office file 212470/1a, August 8 1911, quoted in Hikins, op cit, p. 186. Hikins disputes this claim, p. 187, and argues: "The real significance of this decision may lie in the fact that it came just after the Strike Committee's call for support of the railwaymen. There had been, in fact, no serious disorder." The greater determination of the railway companies to resist the workers' demands than that shown by the shipping companies must also have influenced the magistrates' decision.

3. Transport Worker, August 1911, second edition.

From platform No.1 at St. George's Plateau Tom Mann announced that if the railway companies would not settle with the railwaymen there would be a general strike:

> "We cannot, in the face of the military and extra police drafted into the city have effectual picketing, and we cannot accept the display of force as a challenge. We shall be prepared to declare on Tuesday morning a general strike, that will mean a strike of all transport men of all classes....If you are in favour of that action, if we get no favourable reply from the railway companies, please hold up your hands."[1]

The report continues:

> "The response to that request was unanimous. All within hearing held up their hands, and at least 20,000 people in front of Bro. Tom Mann's platform held up both hands in the air."

Billal Quilliam of the carters followed Mann and also supported the general strike call, which was simultaneously being moved on all the other platforms.

At this point three policemen began to attack the crowd in Lord Nelson Street, giving the signal to hundreds of other police who launched a "savage and monstrous attack".[2] This triggered a three day riot throughout Liverpool which displayed all the contradictory consciousness of which the city was capable. In some areas residents came out and joined the strikers in fighting the police,[3] while on the frontiers between Catholic and Protestant areas some old sectarian scores were settled.[4] The Liverpool Territorials were ordered to hand in their rifle bolts[5] because the Home Office would not trust them.

1. Ibid.
2. Transport Worker, August 1911, second edition.
3. Holton, op cit, p.332, says this was especially true of the North End.
4. Hikins, op cit, p.191
5. Home Office file 212470/120, quoted by Hikins, op cit, p. 192.

From August 13 until August 19 1911 all the transport workers in Liverpool were out on strike: some 70,000 railway and waterside workers by August 19. The strike committee issued permits for moving necessary foodstuffs like bread which it set free on August 14. Even the Liverpool postmaster was forced to ask its permission to allow the movement of overseas mail.[1]

On August 17, the day the railway strike was made official, the Government started to mediate and Lloyd George finally offered a Royal Commission to examine the railway conciliation machinery. The railwaymen's return to work (after a meeting attended by only 3,000 of the 15 000 Liverpool railwaymen) broke the strike committee's policy that no group should return until the grievances of all were settled. But the shipping employers and NUDL then agreed a resumption on the terms of the August 3 agreement. At first, the municipal tramway company refused to reinstate 250 men, but when the strike committee suspended the ending of the strike, it agreed to reinstate all the men "as and when required" - terms which were only partially honoured. On August 24 1911 the strike committee therefore ordered a general resumption of work and wound itself up.[2]

The Liverpool transport strike had a major impact not only on the labour movement, but also on the local middle class. During the strike

1. Hikins, op cit, p.193-4. Holton, op cit, p.337, argues that Hikins' account of the strike overestimates the control of the Liverpool strike committee because it was only controlling foodstuffs, the police were not cowed and continued to make arrests, and because it had little authority over the North End docks.
2. For the end of the strike see: Hikins, op cit, p. 194-5.

the clerks who worked for the Corporation and for the big shipowners formed a Liverpool Civil Service League to "enlist voluntary helpers to the work of the city in time of need."[1] It was formally established on August 19 1911 at a meeting held in the Town Hall where it was set up as "a permanent organisation of Citizens willing to assist the Authorities in preserving the health, safety and well-being of the City in time of need."[2] The Lord Mayor was President of the League which was controlled by a managing committee that included five notable Council leaders (Conservative and Liberal) - four of whom were magistrates - as well as the Chairman of the Mersey Dock Board, the Presidents of the Cotton Association, Provision Trade, Corn Trade,and Fruit Brokers' Association, a representative of the Bank of England, the Chairman of the Officers' Guild who provided many of the League's members.

Yet the 1911 transport strike also inserted a labour world vision among the strands of Liverpool commonsense thought - a vision that could possibly neutralise sectarianism if not entirely replace or destroy it. Whether this happened or not depended on how this new (for Liverpool) world vision rooted itself in the Liverpool working class. It was expressed in Liverpool in two different ways. One was through the syndicalist approach of Tom Mann and the Transport Worker, which was first published as a strike paper and then appeared monthly until March 1912. The second was through the particular brand of labourism and municipal socialism advanced in the Liverpool Forward from 1912 to 1914.

1. Newscutting Books, 12 p.216a Liverpool Archive. Liverpool Local History Library, Picton. Original handout pasted in to the volume.
2. Ibid.
3. Op cit, p.216b. In December 1911 a letter was circulated claiming membership of more than one thousand for the League. It was used again during World War 1 and in 1919. Its organisational base was inside the Corporation clerks.

Syndicalism

Tom Mann saw the 1911 transport strike as proof of the power of direct action and union solidarity across grades and different groups of workers - industrial unionism[1]. The two banners on the first issue of the Transport Worker were "For Direct Action" and "Non-political"[2] and the strike clearly influenced Mann in a "non-political" and non-Parliamentary[2] direction. After the strike ended, he wrote:

> "There are some who seem to be under the impression that the mainspring of the recent turmoil is to be found in some section bent upon some scheme of political action to bring confusion on the present Government, and reap advantages of a political character themselves, all such may rest assured that the unrest has no such origin. The industrial movement is neither political nor anti-political, but it is largely non-political."[3]

It was so, he argued, because of the "deep-seated dissatisfaction at the results of Labour Representation in Parliament" which had arisen not only because the MPs were now "bourgeois", but also, as they claimed, because "the opportunities are so few".

1. The resolution Mann was to have originally moved at the August 13 rally stated: "That this meeting heartily congratulates the Transport workers of Liverpool and other ports on the successes achieved by the recent effort for improvement of the conditions, and now urges upon all workers to organise industrially, and all Unions to unite for solidarity locally, nationally and internationally (sic), as to means whereby industrial and social changes can be made, until all workers shall receive the full reward of their labours." (My emphasis, J.S.)Transport Worker, August 1911.
2. Transport Worker, August 1911. Holton interprets the banner "Non-political" as non-parliamentary. But in Liverpool, to be "non-political" also meant to be neither Orange nor Green, and Mann's position on Parliament was clearly still undergoing changes. Thus less than a year earlier, at the ISEL founding Conference Mann stressed that anti-parliamentarism was not a condition for joining: "There has nothing been said here of an Anti-Parliamentary character. Let us each enjoy our own opinions of Parliamentary effort and its value". Industrial Syndicalist, December 1910 in Brown, op cit.
3. Ibid, September 1911.

In this same article Mann described the French syndicalist movement whose ideas came closest to his own:

> "The Syndicalists are non-parliamentarian, anti-militarist, and fervently and determinedly anti-capitalist; they are always and everywhere in favour of DIRECT ACTION. Direct action by industrial organisation on lines that makes Industrial Solidarity possible and practical, that is their method. They are out to achieve the Social Revolution by means of the General Strike... To go to the legislative institutions in order to fight the capitalist class is held to be absurd as working class grievances arise not from political but from economic sources, and the cure is to be found not in political, but in economic changes; and politics do not dominate the economic, it is the economic, ie, the industrial that dominate the political, the present capitalist class first obtained ownership of the means of production and then they turned to politics, having the first, the second followed; but getting control of politics does not give control of the economic situation."

The 1911 transport strike was, he argued,

> "...the first time in our history that a definite lead has been given to an industrial uprising on a considerable scale by those who have no confidence in Parliamentary action as a present day remedial agency."[2]

The core of Mann's syndicalism was this belief "that the working class Movement that is not revolutionary in character is not of the slightest use to the working class"[3] Seeking the obstacle to this "revolutionary character", Mann located the trade unions' sectionalism. It was this, he believed that defeated the workers rather than the capitalist class. Thus the key in Britain was to amalgamate the existing unions:

> "I know it will be a formidable task to get the existing Unions to unite wholeheartedly and share courageously in the Class War. But I believe that it can be done... Moreover I am entirely satisfied that the right course

1. Transport Worker, September 1911.
2. Ibid.
3. Industrial Syndicalist, July 1910. In Brown, Op cit.

> to pursue here in Britain is not to show hostility to the existing Unionist Movement, but rather to make it clear what it ought to be - the real class-conscious fighting machinery for the overthrow of Capitalism and the realisation of Socialism"[1].

The amalgamation process, Mann argued, would finally end in one giant industrial union, and,

> "The only existing organisation in this country, which is, as it were, marked out to undertake this all-important task, is 'The General Federation of Trade Unions' of which Mr Appleton is the able Secretary"[2].

But the new movement, Mann believed, had to be both revolutionary in aim - for the abolition of the wage system - and revolutionary in practice - refusing to enter any longterm agreements with the employers and seizing every change of a fight.

Mann's theory of class consciousness was thus similar to the 'essential' theory held by the ILP: for Mann, because the trade unions 'belonged' to the workers, if they could be united the unions would then essentially express the interests of all workers and become revolutionary agents of the class struggle. For the ILP, since the Parliamentary Labour Party was seen as ultimately representing the interests of the workers, it was the Labour Party that would express their interests[3].

1. Industrial Syndicalist, July 1910.
2. Ibid.
3. Mann's principal enemy was therefore sectionalism, while the ILP's bitterest foe was Lib-Labism. When later 'The Syndicalist' is forced to take a position on the women's question because of Lansbury's stand in the House of Commons, they support Lansbury and describe the suffragettes as "those women whose attachment to their convictions reaches heroism, and who, for these reasons, deserve nothing but respect and admiration". Their description of Lansbury is that "he has given us one more proof that he really is the Lansbury who we had devined, who we love and of whom we are proud" The Syndicalist July 1912. Lansbury, although laughed at as a Parliamentarian, had been associated with Mann during the Transport Strike and with ISEL and the 'Daily Herald' was always considered a direct action paper.

After the transport strike Mann attempted to create a loose-knit organisation of syndicalists around the Transport Worker. He sent an open letter "to every Official of every Union in Liverpool" arguing for them to take the Transport Worker every month ("and subsequently weekly") to sell in all the ports and chief industrial centres.[1] The letter stated,

> "The keynote of all this paper's advocacy will be industrial solidarity on purely non-political lines".

For Mann this meant,

> "We must on the Municipal plane be Industrialists all the the time, and avoid dealing with religion and politics as we did during the industrial campaign"[2].

The Transport Worker was, for a time, a mass circulation newspaper in one town, claiming an initial 20,000 circulation and probably being read by many more. It was inserting itself into the 'commonsense' of Liverpool.

But despite the wishes of the syndicalists[3] it was impossible to ignore "religion and politics" in Liverpool. The trade union leaders were not politically neutral, Ireland could not be

1. Transport Worker, September 1911.

2. Ibid, November 1911.

3. The delegate from Walthamstow Trades Council to the November 1910 ISEL Conference argued: "Take Liverpool as an illustration. There they found various sections of the community - Irishmen, Orangemen , and so on - and directly you touched these faiths Trade Unionism was thrown over by the organised workers... If Trade Unionism was going to do anything at all it must drop politics. Politics, like religion, was a matter for the persons themselves; and it was of no concern to the worker whether other workers were Liberal or Conservatives. All that was necessary for workers was to understand the solidarity of their class." Industrial SYndicalist, December 1910, in Brown, op cit.

skated over in Liverpool, and all groups with any base at all within the local working class movement were forced to take an attitude to the municipal elections and Tory Democracy. The Tranport Worker did not survive Tom Mann's arrest for sedition in 1912 and its last issue appeared in March 1912.

The 'good sense' thinkers of Liverpool syndicalism also read (and sold) the Industrial Syndicalist. First published in July 1910 it presented a more developed and tightly argued syndicalism than did the Transport Worker. But it also revealed a further weakness in Mann's syndicalism, his lack of emphasis on trade union democracy. For while other less influential writers for the Industrial Sundicalist did argue for union democracy[1], this theme was absent from Mann's articles before, during and after the transport strike. Mann's view was that those officials who made mistakes did so because they represented craft trade unions, and he exempted the officials at the head of the 'mass' unions like the Miners and general unions from criticism. Yet it was the leaders of the general unions like Sexton and Milligan in the NUDL who were least likely to be controlled by their members and whose branches were least likely to have any autonomy[2]. And it was they who were responsible for the emergence of increasingly right-wing 'Labourist' politics within the trade unions.

1. See: Industrial Syndicalist, February 1911, in Brown, op cit. article by Hay and Ablett entitled, "A minimum wage for Miners".
2. Later, in the 1914-18 War they were also most likely to become Army recruiters and to enlist in Glasgow and Liverpool.

Mann's strategy of building up a network of industrial syndicalists[1] faced another obstacle in Liverpool: a layer of hostile working class organisations which couldn't be bypassed and to which the question of Ireland was central. The syndicalists, somewhat ostrich-like, tried to ignore this fact of Liverpool life. Thus when Jim Larkin at the first ISEL Conference asked them "to leave Ireland out of the resolution. They had made enough hash of their own affairs - they must not interfere with Ireland", delegates didn't even discuss this objection and left the words "throughout the British Isles" intact in the resolution[2]. And one delegate typically advised 1912 ISEL Conference,

> "At Belfast, in the same shipyards, on the same ships, working side by side, are Home Rulers and Orangemen , Roman Catholics and Protestants, all being starved and sweated, all being wage-slaves. Tell them that they are wage-slaves and for that reason adopt the Syndicalist policy and act independent of any political or religious school"[3].

In July 1912, when the explosion of anti-Home Rule agitation in Ireland forced them to adopt a position, the Syndicalist, a paper which attempted to present an alternative perspective to all aspects of ILP/LP policy, merely resorted to the standard left ILP position: it reported a speech by Madame Sorgue in which she argued for an autonomous and federated Ireland but against Irish nationlism because she opposed all nationalism[4].

1. This was not a dual unionist approach. He believed in working within existing unions. See Industrial Syndicalist, September 1910, in Brown, op cit: "Whilst guarding against the formation of anything in the nature of a brand new organisation (that being neither desired nor desirable), we must have that cohesion of sympathisers that will enable us to get into ready touch with each other".
2. Ibid, December 1910.
3. The Syndicalist, December 1912.
4. The Syndicalist, July 1912.

In the immediate aftermath of the transport strike, Mann was forced by the Council's victimisation of the tramway workers[1] to take up the issue of the municipal elections. He made his principled stance clear:

> "It is necessary to make it perfectly clear that we do not favour the Municipalisation of Industries any more than we do the Nationalisation of Industries"[2].

But, he went on, given that Liverpool Council employed more than 4,000 men then it was necessary to pay attention to the "type of man elected as City Councillor". This was because the council workers were not yet perfectly "industrially organised and properly related to each other" and because the Councillors were victimising the militant tramwaymen:

> "Nowhere else has the same bitterness been shewn against the Trammen themselves as Council employees, or against those who were mainly responsible for the strike, particular the Strike Committee"[3].

He described the councillors as "Plutocratic enemies of labour who have fattened by the exploitation of the labourers" and was therefore ready to support in the elections all candidates who were ready,

> "With us to make the first question:'Re-instatement of every man to his rightful position, and adequate wages and proper working conditions for every Council employee, women as well as men"[4].

Labour's municipal election programme, however, barely challenged Tory Democracy. Its six points were:

> "1st. Keeping out the Reactionaries.
> 2nd. Fair treatment of every Municipal employee of both

1. See above, p. 380.
2. "Our relation to the coming Municipal Elections", Transport Worker, November 1911.
3. Transport Worker, November 1911.
4. Ibid.

sexes; with the unchecked right to organise, the elimination of pettifogging and irritating espionage, and entire freedom to do as they please in their own time.

3rd. Provision in building regulations that every house shall have a bath, and present houses to be provided therewith by the landlords.

4th. Adequate provision of suitable open spaces for the holding of Public Demonstrations and Meetings.

5th. Adequate provision of Municipal Halls in the various districts for the holding of Public Meetings.

6th. Adequate Playgrounds for Children within easy reach off all, particularly in the most densely populated districts"[1].

The only issue on which it differentiated itself from Tory Democracy was on the victimised tramwaymen[2].

And Mann's influence was exerted towards narrowing down the political issues to this sole question.

1. Ibid.
2. Some Tory Democrats even conceded this point. See below, p.392.

1911 Municipal Elections

Most of the Labour candidates in the November 1911 municipal elections had stood before and were part of the official Labour movement axis in the city[1]. The ILP's election posters were extremely limited in political content. Having dealt with poverty, the decrease in real wages and the necessity for a living wage, for example, one asked for votes,

> "Because Municipal Socialism (trams, schools, landownership, housing, electricity) loses much of its value to working people, unless they are well represented on the Council."[2].

Another included demands for medical inspection in schools, more teachers, a fair living wage and cheap tram fares, and argued that all this could be paid for by "the proper management of the City estates"[3].

But as the campaign developed, the number of candidates was increased from 10 to 15, the Transport Worker became more heavily involved, and the campaign's focus narrowed. The joint election leaflet concentrated on the "Russian" methods used against the workers and the attitude of the Tramways and Watch Committees which proved both Liberal and Conservatives were against the workers[4]. It argued that if the Labour candidates were returned they would be backed up by the 80,000 workers affiliated to the Trades Council.

The leaders of the Conservative and Liberal Parties responded

1. Three only, Sexton, James Stephenson and . Murphy, had served on the Transport Strike Committee.
2. Bulley's election poster in "1911 Municipal Elections Liverpool - Newscuttings Books". Picton Library.
3. Ibid.
4. "1911 Municipal Elections Liverpool - Newscuttings Book", Picton Library, p. 22.

by agreeing not to oppose each other's official candidates[1]. Whether for this reason, or because they were on the defensive, the Protestant/ Home Rule card was, for the first time, a secondary theme in the Conservative campaign: they fought on their social reform record. Thus in Wavertree West, the Conservative candidate, E. G. Jackson, had been a member of the Liverpool Trades Council ten years earlier and had worked at "improving tramway services" and at rehousing 15,000 of the poor on the Housing Committee. The Conservatives campaigned on the theme: "How could the Labour Party oppose such a man ?"[2].

Tory Democracy was defended in the elections by Salvidge, Utting and Kyffin-Taylor. They stood on the record of the Liverpool Tory party, for trade unionism, and against syndicalism/socialism. Kyffin-Taylor summarised their position:

> "Several lessons had been taught by the strike but in his view the greatest lesson of all was to unite into a single class to do away with the conditions which tended to strikes... to see that... every man received a proper wage for his labour and to rid themselves of the reproach that people were left to house in some of the awful slums they had in the city"[3].

Utting stood by their record:

1. Ibid and see: Liverpool Daily Post, October 3 1911, where Salvidge is reported as saying: "The decision arrived at was in consequence of the recent special and disturbed condition of the city and the state of unrest consequent thereon, which had to materially affected the trade interests of the citizens generally. Both parties considered it their highest duty to avoid any public excitement at the forthcoming elections".
2. Liverpool Courier, October 19 1911. The Courier asked the same question the following day about Dr Utting in Kirkdale ward, detailing his work on health and port sanitary conditions. The same was said of Colonel Kyffin-Taylor in respect to his work on the Housing Committee.
3. Liverpool Daily Post, October 26 1911.

> "Go where you will - Scotland, Germany or any other progressive country... and there is not a single city which can show such splendid work as has been accomplished by the Housing Committee of Liverpool"[1].

In Netherfield ward, Harold Davies said he believed in better wages and holidays for Council workers[2], while Salvidge argued:

> "We are not fighting Labour but we are out to fight the Socialist and all his doctrines"[3].

He declared he had run the risk of losing personal friendships through supporting the mass, and said the railway porters who came out did have a major grievance. But, he believed, other railwaymen should not strike: what good was a sympathy strike of the tramwaymen to the railways? Previously, he

> "had never hesitated on all occasions to side with the masses of the city on any just demand (hear, hear). He could not, however, lend himself to these proposals to paralyse all trade and industry by a general strike - a strike not only of those with a grievance, but also of those who were happy in their employment...
> "He naturally objected to the reinstatement of one set of tramwaymen and not of another, but there was no sense in tramwaymen leaving their comfortable situation 'in sympathy' with the railway porters"[4].

Replying to the charge that the Conservatives were corrupt capitalists he asked whether the Labour candidate, A.K. Bulley, would swop his bank balance with the Conservative and Protestant candidate for St Domingo. To an attack on the brewing interests he replied that Whittaker's money which underwrote the Labour Party came from brewing. The only real answer to industrial unrest, Salvidge argued, was the fostering of new industries[5].

Harold Davies, a Conservative and Protestant candidate, argued

1. Ibid, October 31 1911.
2. Liverpool Courier, October 31 1911.
3. Ibid, October 28 1911.
4. Liverpool Daily Post, October 25 1911
5. Ibid.

he was in favour of trade unions and simultaneously played the Protestant card:

> "They would not have the socialist policy and by victories would also encourage their loyal comrades in Ireland and help to kill Home Rule. In religion he was a Protestant as was all his people before him"[1].

Sir Charles Petrie, the leader of the Conservative group on the Council, on the other hand, defended the Tramways Committee at his meetings which were duly heckled - especially when he said of the tramway workers - "400 of these have been very foolish"[2]. Petrie repeated the Medical Officer of Health's charge that the epidemic of infantile diarrhoea was caused by the strike[3]. The Labour candidates replied in a leaflet pointing out the epidemic began in July, before the strike, and because of the incubation time the strike couldn't have affected the children until the last week of August when it was already abating[4]. Tom Mann also took on Dr Hope's "lies" at every meeting he did in Liverpool and at the Transport workers' demonstration on Sunday October 22[5].

The election results were a massive Labour breakthrough: seven Labour councillors were elected. They won Everton and Garston against Liberal opponents, Brunswick against an Independent, St Anne's, Edge Hill and Low Hill against Conservatives, and St. Domingo against a

1. Liverpool Courier, October 31 1911. Dr Utting, standing in Kirkdale, also said he supported trade unionism, but his greatest dread was if it "merged with fearful syndicalism": Liverpool Daily Post, October 26 1911.
2. Liverpool Courier, October 25 1911. Petrie also tried to claim the strike was caused by outside agitation.
3. Dr Hope made the charges in a long article in the Liverpool Daily Post called "Strike's death toll" on October 18 1911. When Petrie repeated the charge the Kensington meeting broke up in disorder.
4. "1911 Municipal Elections Glasgow" op cit, p. 23.
5. Liverpool Daily Post, October 23 1911.

Conservative and Independent[1].

The Conservative were upset most by the narrowness with which they held the traditional Protestant wards. Petrie explained the loss of Edge Hill and Low Hill because they were "railwaymen's wards" and always more likely to go Liberal or Labour[2]. St Domingo was lost, he thought, because of a "little Conservative split" : the retiring Conservative Councillor had tried to shut down St Domingo's pit, George Wise's regular meeting place, and so there were two Conservative candidates, one supported by Salvidge and Wise, and another by Utting, Kyffin Taylor and Sir Charles Petrie[3]. Salvidge reacted bitterly against the "commercial men" of Liverpool who spoke about the socialists "but they never strode over a straw to help to defeat them"[4]. Utting's analysis was more realistic: in May there had been 22,000 trade unionists in Liverpool; by October 1911 there were 90,000. Of these, however, only 7-8,000 were advanced Socialists, and so Utting argued the Conservatives had to appeal to the rest[5].

Following the 1911 elections, a Labour group was formed for the first time and a new paper, the Liverpool Forward, was started as the Labour voice of Liverpool[6]. Yet the Liverpool Forward never stood

1. Maddock, op cit, p. 206-7, quoting the 1911 Liverpool LRC Annual Report.
2. Liverpool Courier, November 2 1911.
3. Ibid.
4. Liverpool Daily Post, November 7 1911.
5. Ibid.
6. Holton, op cit, assumes that the Liverpool Forward's problems were because it was dominated by the local trade union and ILP officialdom. In fact this was also true of the Glasgow Forward. The difference between the two papers was in the beliefs of the two groups who ran them, not in the nature of the groups.

up to Liverpool Protestantism. Its report of the 1912 Labour May Day demonstration, for example, shared front page space with the carters' May Day parade the previous day[1]. And it gave an entirely neutral report of the 1912 Liverpool Orange Walk under the headline - "Orangemen's Great Demonstration - and the sub-head - "Home Rule Conspiracy doomed"[2]. In October 1912 a similar headline described the Garston Shiel Park demonstration[3] : "Liverpool for Ulster. Tory Demonstration a Great Success. Triumph for Alderman Salvidge"[4].

The first half of 1912 was, however, the high point for the ILP in Liverpool. By July 13 branches had been opened and the Liverpool Forward boasted:

> "The ILP is the People's Party, all sorts and conditions of men work side by side in its ranks. Why are you not in the ILP? If you feel the need for an independent Political Party, if you agree with the Collectivist Ideal, then throw in your lot with us, and do it NOW"[5]

The description "People's Party" was not one that Glasgow's radical socialist would have chosen.

1. Liverpool Forward, May 1912.
2. Ibid. July 1912.
3. See below, p. 401-402.
4. Ibid, October 12 1912.
5. Ibid, July 20 1912.

Trade Unionism

The failure of the local syndicalist paper, the absence of rooted syndicalist organisation and the reliance of the Labour paper on Protestant politics, meant that the major gain of the 1911 transport strike was the development of Liverpool trade unionism. The Transport Worker published these figures in November 1911:

Table 17 Liverpool Trade Unionism

	Numbers in May 1911	Present strength
General Labourers	1,000	4,000
Sailors and Firemen	4,000	16,000
Stewards	2,000	13,000
Warehousemen and Mill workers	Nil	5,500
Carters	5,500	7,500
Railwaymen	3,000	10,000
Navvies	1,000	4,000
Dockers	8,000	31,000
	24,500	91,000

The Protestant carters were best organised before the dispute, and they added only another 2,000 members, ie, one third. But overall there was a quadrupling of membership, and of these 91,000 trade unionists, over 80,000 became affiliated to Liverpool Trades Council. The largest non-affiliated group remained the carters.

In the aftermath of the transport strike, however, the role of the Trades Council became more difficult to define. It had previously encouraged the formation of a Building Trades Federation, and then the Transport Workers' Federation. Increasingly it left sensitive issues to be dealt with by these Federations focusing itself on such questions as National Insurance and disputes involving small societies. Thus when Tom Mann was imprisoned, for example, it was the Transport Workers' Federation which called the protest meeting and the Trades Council merely agreed to 'fall in line'.

1912

Two critical disputes occurred in 1912 which, together, helped dissipate the Labour unity of 1911. They were the Garston Bobbins Workers' strike and the dispute on the docks over the new Clearing House registration scheme. In neither did the Trades Council play any significant role. When the Garston strike appeal arrived at the Trades Council in June, for example, it was left for the "delegates assembled" to raise it in their unions[1]. In August 1912, a few days before the Shiel Park "Bloody Sunday' anniversary meeting, the police attacked a crowd of Garston pickets after stones had been thrown at a tramcar carrying strike breakers[2]. Among the crowd were a large number of women and children. Yet the Trades Council only discussed the Garston strike again when Lord Derby, the Lord Mayor, refused to set up a Police Enquiry. The Garston strike was finally lost.

Derby had become Lord Mayor after the 1911 transport strike and he was systematically trying to strengthen police powers over processions and demonstrations[3]. In July 1912, the City Council voted

1. Liverpool Trades Council, Minutes, June 12 1912.
2. A woman described the events in the Petition to the Lord Mayor the Earl of Derby calling for an enquiry: "I was among the crowd who were watching the strike breakers getting on the car... they were pulling faces and jeering at the strikers. A stone was then thrown and smashed the windows. The car went away to Liverpool. About ten minutes after the car had left the crowd were moving down Church Road slowly, and when the crowd was near the Church the Constables drew their batons and charged, striking right and left, knocking people down." A copy of the petition can be found in the Liverpool Trades Council records, 331 TRA 5/6.
3. The Liverpool Corporation Act of 1912 was an attempt to institutionalise sectarian peace. Agreement was reached that "nothing of an illegal character was to be carried or erected in the public streets, that all processions were to be held by permission and to have police protection and that public spaces were to be allocated for open air demonstrations'. Henderson, op cit, 15-16; see also Liverpool Forward June 8th 1912.

him the Freedom of the City, and Murphy on the Liverpool Trades Council then forced through the suspension of standing orders to discuss why six Labour Councillors had also voted in favour[1], but no effective action was taken against them.

An even greater blow to the new-found Labour solidarity in Liverpool was delivered against the dockers. In July 1912 the shipping employers introduced a new Clearing House scheme to increase the flexibility of the dockers, systematise the casual dock labour system and facilitate the operation of the National Insurance scheme. It produced intense opposition. The system of surplus stands allowed men from any part of the docks to work anywhere and the stand system was one of the most degrading systems imaginable.

The Monday the scheme was due to operate, only 1,000 of the 15,000 dockers required actually worked. On Tuesday the Dock Labour Joint Committee issued an ultimatum: if the dockers didn't resume work by Wednesday noon they would have broken the 1911 agreement and all its gains would be lost. George Milligan then argued successfully for a resumption at the Canada dock mass meeting and they returned to work taking others with them, leaving only the Alexandra dock, where resistance to the Clearing House scheme originated, still out. In Birkenhead the strike also continued and some Birkenhead dockers went across to Liverpool to try, unsuccessfully, to pull the Liverpool men out again[2]. By Friday morning the resistance had been broken: 17,000

1. Liverpool Trades Council, Minutes, July 10 1912. In October after the attack on the Garston workers and Derby's refusal of a Police Enquiry, Murphy again returned to the issue of the Freedom of the City and argued that no Labour Councillor should attend the ceremony. The Trades Council chairman then offered his resignation, but was reinstated on a vote of confidence. See Ibid, October 9 1912. James Sexton did attend the ceremony.

2. Liverpool Forward July 20 1912.

dockers had registered as tally holders and the surplus stand system was working[1].

The breaking of the dockers' solidarity in 1912 was a particular set-back for Mersey syndicalism. For the dockers' resistance to the Clearing House scheme was heavily reinforced by syndicalist antagonism to co-operation by the NUDL with the employers and the government. Two dockers, Crowston and Mitchell, were sued by Sexton for reprinting as a pamphlet an article about "Slimy Jimmy" Sexton which had originally appeared in Larkin's Irish Worker[2]. What became clear during the libel case was that Sexton established the Dock Labour Joint Committee with the employers and signed the Clearing House agreement without reference to the membership or Executive of the NUDL. Asked: "Did you consult anybody beforeyou came to the agreement with the shipowners of Liverpool?", Sexton replied: "Yes; all my colleagues - the branch secretaries - in the Mersey district" and named just six other men[3].

1. Liverpool Forward, July 20 1912, quotes R. Williams from the Labour Exchange: "The surplus stands are being used but at the present moment, the men seem to be a little nervous at going outside their own areas for work. I should like to point out that they have a perfect right to present themselves anywhere. They have perfect freedom."

2. Ibid quotes pamphlet based on Irish Worker, May 25 1912. The article was part of the ongoing battle between Larkin and Sexton which had resulted in a split in the NUDL in 1908 which led to Larkin forming the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union. Larkin supported direct action and detested Sexton's manoeuvring: "The presumption of this trickster - a creature who never yet convinced one man of the benefits of the combination - who has played the game of compromise all his life; never had any principles, any morals, any manners, but, like the vulture, follows the fight from afar off, and when it is safe comes down to enjoy the spoil."

3. Liverpool Forward, July 20 1912. To another question: "You didn't consult the Executive?", Sexton replied - "The Executive (of the NUDL) have nothing to do with the compiling of port working rules."

The institutionalisation of Sexton's power over the dockers, the Clearing House scheme, the batoning down of the Garston bobbin workers' picket, the introduction of a new conciliation arbitration scheme on the railways and the lack of any discipline over the Labour councillors, all helped dissipate the Liverpool Labour movement's confidence. From August 1912 the Trades Council's fighting spirit evaporated and it gave up its pretension to be the centre of the Liverpool Labour movement [1]. This process was, however, not an inevitable one. The anniversary rally in Shiel Park commemorating 'Bloody Sunday' attracted 50,000 people in August 1912 and began with a march of 20-30,000 trade unionists (of whom some were dockers "hoping Jimmy Sexton would be there!"[2]. But at the same time, Sir Edward Carson was launching his Covenant campaign.

1. Liverpool Trades Council, Minutes, August 1912. Murphy's isolation was most evident in relation to the Dublin workers' lock-out.
2. Liverpool Forward, August 16 1912.

Carson

In July 1912, the Liberal paper, the Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, was complacent about the Belfast Orange Walk. It reported that despite expectations it had only taken one hour and 20 minutes to pass instead of the usual two-and-a-half hours[1]. However, it went on:

> "The 'star' turn of the meeting was provided by Mr F.E. Smith, KC, MP, who has at last been driven into the Ulster Orange net."

- a key figure in launching a new appeal to militant Protestantism in Liverpool.

In September 1912, Sir Edward Carson launched his Covenant campaign throughout Ulster, and after "Ulster Day" in Belfast came to Liverpool to join a massive demonstration on Monday evening, September 30th[2]:

> "The Tory organisations of Liverpool and the district proved last night with considerable emphasis... that in part of Lancashire, where the native Conservatism is greatly strengthened by an influx of Ulster Orangeism, there are dwelling many thousands of men and women who possess and are ready to take a good deal of trouble in order to demonstrate it, quite a large fund of anti-Irish and anti-Catholic sentiment... It was without question a great demonstration of numbers, and its 'stage management' was worthy of the high reputation in that respect of the Conservative Working Men's Association and of the Orange lodges of the city and district, who organised it"[3].

The organisers estimated 100,000 attended, but the Liverpool Daily

1. Liverpool Daily Post & Mercury, July 13 1912.
2. The campaign culminated in a massive "Ulster Day" on Saturday 28th September 1912 when thousands signed the covenant in Belfast. From Belfast Carson went directly to Liverpool and then to Glasgow. The effect of thousands of Ulstermen signing the Covenant in one day in Belfast, some in their own blood, was immense in Liverpool - much less so in Glasgow
3. Liverpool Daily Post & Mercury, October 1 1912.

Post and Mercury reported "it would be safe to allow a substantial discount from this calculation"[1]. The demonstrators carried no weapons and the route chosen "indicated a desire to avoid unfriendly collisions"[2]. The "stage management" included marches coming in from twelve separate areas and,

> "...the state entry of Pastor George Wise, in whose honour a number of rockets were fired and to whom a large green apple brought over from Ulster was presented by a lady admirer"[3].

The speakers were Carson, Lord Londonderry, Lord Charles Beresford, F.E. Smith and Alderman Salvidge. Their central theme was an appeal to loyalty and religion against the different ideas of loyalty and religion of the men from the "South and West" of Ireland[3]. F.E. Smith claimed he would have three ships from three Liverpool shipowners to carry "ten thousand young men of Liverpool to Ulster", and went on:

> "If the cattle manners are marching on to Belfast and you can get the ships to take you there, will you come with us? (cries of 'Yes')...
>
> "I say, speaking to the largest political meeting I have ever seen, that whatever the consequences may be, never never, never, shall Home Rule become law without an appeal to England (loud cheers). And I say this in the words of one of the most determined leaders that a great political party ever had, 'If the Government tries to order the Army to march upon Ulster, they will be lynched upon the lamp posts of London'"[4].

Following this virulent outburst of Conservative Orangeism, both

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid. It is not clear how far this was the organisers' intention or the result of Lord Derby's intervention: he had arranged for the meeting to be at Shiel Park rather than at St George's Plateau which was close to the Catholic Scotland Road area.
3. The Liverpool Daily Post & Mercury drily commented: "The assembly at Sheil Park, we can quite understand, was in no mood to hear argument, and it does not seem to have been bored with any".
4. Liverpool Daily Post & Mercury, October 1 1912.

the Irish Nationalists and the Liberals were placed on the defensive. The Irish remained defiant: a group of 100 Irish women from the Scotland Road area stood on the route of the march home singing "God Save Ireland" and dancing[1]. While the Liberals appealed to Christian virtues: the Chairman of the Fairfield Liberal Club denounced the "orgies of revelry in which their opponents were then indulging", and protested against the use of the Orange card:

> "With subtle intuition the Tories had again rallied masses of the working classes to their side by an appeal to sectarian hatred and passion. To call Home Rule a religious question was to admit forgetfulness that charity and brotherly love were the foundation stone of the Christian faith"[2].

Tom Mann's syndicalism had attempted to ignore politics and religion and focused on 'educating' trade union branches into 'true', syndicalist, trade unionism. But faced with such a strong polarisation among the working class, the absence of a political organisation to hold the 'men of faith' together, meant that syndicalism as a separate current distinct from simply economistic trade unionism, disappeared. The 1912 syndicalist conference on amalgamation appeared to have no greater number of Liverpool delegates than the 1910 conference, before the 1911 transport strike[3].

1. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, October 1 1912.
2. Ibid.
3. The Syndicalist Dec. 1912. Two ISEL Conferences were held in November 1912, one in London and one in Manchester. The Conference in Manchester decided to elect a committee of sixteen delegates to form an Amalgamation Committee for Manchester but could only take the decision "to form a similar one on the Liverpool district".

   According to Holton, op cit, p. 423, ISEL branch was established in Liverpool in December 1912 but this was co-ordinated by Guy Bowmen from London and disappeared in May 1913.

1913 Dublin Lockout

From the start of 1913 Larkin launched a massive trade union drive in Dublin: one factory and company after another had been struck in a series of small strikes, usually lasting less than a week, but occasionally several months. In August Martin Murphy, owner of the local newspapers and the Tramway Company, attempted to break the union in both[1]. Finally, on September 3 1913, The Dublin Employers' Federation (representing 400 employers) locked out all members of the two Larkin unions, the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union and the Irish Women Workers' Union organised by Delia Larkin, James Larkin's sister. 8,000 workers were made unemployed. The lockout lasted until the end of January 1914 when Larkin conceded defeat. He blamed the defeat on the British trade union leaders. Although £150,000 was collected for the strike from workers all over the world, the decision of the Special Trades Union Congress in Britain not to black goods from Dublin (by 2,280,000 votes to 203,000)[2] prevented unofficial sympathetic action

1. C.Desmond Greaves, The Life and Times of James Connolly, p.305-311.

2. Holton, op cit, p.515, points out that Smillie's Miners' Federation block vote of 1 million, and Joe Cotter's speech were central in defeating the solidarity proposal. This decision demonstrated the lack of conviction of the trade union leaderships in the 1912 TUC resolution which reaffirmed "its continued support of independent working class political action in helping the industrial fight for a more equitable share of the wealth produced". This resolution followed a major debate on syndicalism in which Sexton was the most virulent anti-syndicalist, and was carried by 1,693,000 to 49,000 votes. Ramsey MacDonald followed this by defending the Labour Party in a speech where he argued: "Politics with us are real, politics are serious" and cited Home Rule as an example. See: Liverpool Forward, September 13 1912.

from spreading and made it difficult to maintain.

The response of British trade unionists to the Dublin lockout involved all three of the key issues which dominate the 1910-1914 period: direct action and militant trade unionism, Irish Home Rule and the women question. The only socialist paper, however, that took up all three issues was the Daily Herald: it challenged the Catholic hierarchy's attacks on the strikers, reported the picket line confrontations[1] and published Delia Larkin's accounts of the heroism of the women on strike "who throughout have displayed an even finer fighting spirit than the men"[2].

In October 1913, as strikers' children were being taken to England to be cared for, the Archbishop of Dublin published a letter denouncing the mothers as not "worthy of the name of Catholic mothers", and the priests raided the boats and trains reducing the mothers and children to hysterics[3]. The strike was thus an opportunity for British socialists: the Catholic church was in alliance with the employers and the hated Dublin police; women strikers and strikers' wives were massively involved; it was a transport workers' lockout.

The response in Liverpool, however, was largely restricted to the

1. Daily Herald, January 3 1914: "Another victim has been claimed by Murphyism. Alice Brady, the girl of sixteen who was shot by a scab on December 18th, died yesterday of lockjaw, the result of the wound".

2. Ibid. See also Delia Larkin's letter to the Daily Herald November 10th 1913
"The Dublin girls are doing splendid picketing and consequently are being arrested with reason and without reason... Their spirit of independence and their rebellion against their lives of tyrany and misery is heroic".

3. Daily Herald October 23rd 1913.

railwaymen[1]. Some 3,500 men refused to handle goods in transit to and from Liverpool, although the North End dockers helped by handling food parcels going to Dublin from the Co-operative movement[2]. The leaders of the railwaymen had no faith in the Mersey District Council of the Transport Workers Federation:

> "The leaders state that they have not asked the assistance of the Transport Workers Federation, prefering to fight alone"[3].

On September 19 1913 the Trades Council held a special meeting to consider the Dublin lockout. It decided to give £10 and sent out a circular and collecting sheets to all its affiliated societies[4]. Two NUR delegates spoke and the meeting agreed:

> "That we endorse the action of the members of the National Union of Railwaymen who refused to handle tainted goods in the different centres throughout the country and deplore the attitude of their Executive in not supporting their stand with more vigour"[5].

But the Trades Council's support was largely verbal. In October it condemned the Dublin employers' attitude to Sir George Askwith and the English Peace delegation, but also voted with only three opposed to have nothing to do with a Larkin meeting organised in Liverpool:

1. Daily Herald September 17 1913 The sympathetic strike of goods porters began at the North-End on Monday it then spread to the South-End on Wednesday, and then to Edgehill (Daily Herald Sept. 18 1913). On September 18 . 500 railwaymen met and called for a national strike in solidarity. But the strikes were stopped by Unity House (Daily Herald September 19 1913).
2. W.H. Brown "The Story of the Liverpool Co-operative Society Ltd." (1929) p.67.
3. Daily Herald, September 17 1913.
4. Liverpool Trades Council, Minutes, September 19 1913.
5. Ibid.

"It was pointed out by some speakers that to invite Mr Larkin would certainly cause friction among a certain section of the workers in Liverpool, and the Council would be wise to dissociate itself from anything leading up to that position. Mr Marmion asked leave to substitute Mr James Connolly instead of Mr Larkin. Mr Cotter contended that no good would be gained by a public meeting in Liverpool as up to date Liverpool had outpaced all other centres in the amount of subscription raised on behalf of the fund..."[1].

Larkin spoke at the Picton Hall, and, not surprisingly, attacked the Trades Council for its attitude. Cotter replied in the press and the next meeting of the Trades Council considered the Stonemasons' call for Cotter's resignation as Vice-President, but finally took no action[2]. On November 26 1913 a special Trades Council meeting was called. It began with Robinson, the President, offering to resign and being given an overwhelming vote of confidence. Then, however, standing orders were suspended and he was questioned why he was presiding at the Larkin meeting at the Sun Hall, scheduled for December 1. He replied he would be there as Transport Workers' Federation representative, not Trades Council President[3].

1. Ibid, October 8 1913.
2. Ibid, November 12 1913: Cotter claimed his interview was as President of the Cooks and Stewards' Union, not as Trades Council Vice-President. He attacked W. A. Robinson, the Trades Council President for being on the platform at Larkin's Garston meeting who defended himself arguing it wasn't "a Larkin meeting". An amendment regretting Cotter's interview was defeated; so was the substantive motion calling for his resignation. The call originated from the Stonemasons in whose branch Fred Bower, the syndicalist, had considerable influence. The previous month, for example, the Stonemasons had written to the Trades Council "protesting aginst the time of the Council being occupied more with Political work than with Trade Unions" - they were thus for Larkin and against "politics", and the Trades Council rejected both positions.
3. Holton, op cit, p.500-535 argues Robinson's taking the chair was a new attitude on the part of trade union officials by December. In fact, Robinson's attitude was distinct throughout.

This hostility to any direct support of the Dublin workers by the official Liverpool Labour movement was reflected in the Liverpool Forward: at first it called for the extension of the railwaymen's unofficial action, but after that it carried no coverage of the lock-out whatsoever. It was as if it had ceased to exist[1].

In 1914 Liverpool's attention was turned to Ireland for quite a different reason. The Times in June 1914 described Ireland as an armed camp with 24,000 men in the Regular Forces, 10,400 in the Royal Irish Constabulary, 80,000 in the Nationalist Volunteers, and 84,000 in the Ulster Volunteers. These were police estimates[2]. So large had the National Volunteers force become that the Irish Parliamentary Party was forced to put itself at the head of it. The Times was profoundly thankful:

> "The general opinion is that the idealists who now dominate the committee will be no match for the Nationalist Party, which has at its disposal the well-organised machinery of the United Irish League and the Ancient Order of Hibernians"[3].

In June and July 1914 Ireland was on the brink of civil war and in Liverpool 3,000 Irish Nationalists (many of them army reservists) and 1,500 Ulster Unionists[4] were reported to be in secret training. The war that came in August 1914 was very different from the one which many people in Liverpool had been preparing for.

1. Liverpool Forward, September-December 1913.
2. The Times, June 17 1914.
3. Ibid, June 15 1914 See also June 1, June 11, June 13, June 20 1914.
4. The Times March 23 1914. In a different estimate of the Irish National Volunteers in which the numbers were put at 100,000, The Times estimated 35,000 of these to be ex-Army men: Ibid June 11 1914.

B. Glasgow

The most important aspect of the national 1910-13 strike wave for Glasgow was that skilled workers were largely not involved. Accompanying the improvements in trade from 1909, all sections of the skilled labour force experienced general advances in wages and working conditions[1]. The Glasgow Trades Council reported on the years 1912-14:

> "The number of disputes locally have not been so many or quite so prolonged; yet the results to the workers have been most substantial gains, and the work of the affiliated Unions in other directions has all made for great improvement in the conditions of the mass of the working classes."[2]

Those workers who went on strike in Glasgow were generally from the same groups as took action in Liverpool, but there the similarity ends: there was no peak in Glasgow in 1911, and in both 1910 and 1912 women workers in Glasgow were involved in strikes[3].

1. Glasgow Trades Council, Annual Report 1910-11, p.19: "The Building Trades have been in a much better position than they have for years past, and in consequence the masons, bricklayers, joiners, plumbers and lathers have secured advances on their rates of wages. The Engineers and kindred trades are also to have a further advance in January next....The bakers have also had an advance on their wages and some improvement in working conditions. The printing and kindred trades had their wages advanced and their hours of work reduced...."
2. Ibid, 1912-14, p.19.
3. See Glasgow Herald, 1910-1914. In 1910 strikes included the Neilson threadworkers, the carters and the dockers; in 1911, the seamen, railway and tramway workers, followed by the carters and Glasgow bottlemakers; in 1912 dockers, lacemakers and gravediggers followed by the Dalmarnock tube workers and Clyde electricians; in 1913, the carters, council labourers, Blockairn steel workers and the cartwrights. The 1911 Singer's strike was, of course, distinct from other strikes in Glasgow as well as the Liverpool patterns.

The Glasgow Trades Council acted as advisor to many of the disputes involving unskilled workers. In the 1910 docks dispute a Trades Council delegation went to help O'Connor Kessack get the men back into the Union[1] and in 1911 Shinwell went to help the Seamen's Union[2]. During the women textile workers' strike wave, E. Dicks and then Kate Maclean of the Scottish branch of the National Federation of Women Workers constantly reported on their organising work to the Trades Council[3]. In January 1911 the Trades Council's Women Workers' Organising Committee held a meeting of 39 trades involving women[4]. The Trades Council also took up the conditions of work of blind workers[5].

Glasgow Trades Council also considered the role of Labour Exchanges, monitoring very carefully any attempt to use them as recruiting agencies for scab labour.[6] It discussed the question of representation on the Trade Boards, it unanimously opposed compulsory arbitration and debated the cost of living and school board elections. The Trades Council was also a forum for discussing still wider issues. George Lansbury circul-

arised all the Trades Councils about the Poor Law which it then

1. Glasgow Trades Council, Minutes, November 9 1910. Sexton and the Executive had refused to support the dockers in Glasgow when they struck for a wage claim, and the men were leaving the union.
2. E. Shinwell op cit. p.48-52. He ultimately formed a breakaway Union "British Seafarers' Union" in Glasgow and Southampton.
3. Minutes, June, August 1910 for report on the Neilson Mill girls' which unionised the women and initiated a strike wave.
4. Ibid, January 25 1911. The Committee was set up by the Trades Council on September 28 1910, in the middle of the wave of womens' strikes. It was convened by E. Shinwell.
5. Ibid, January 11 1910.
6. Ibid, March 29 1910. In the Leadhill miners' dispute, 13 men had been supplied by the Labour Exchange, and Partick Labour exchange supplied labour to break a strike in Dumbarton..

discussed[1]; it passed resolutions against the death sentence passed on 24 socialists and anarchists in Japan[2] and against the Russian government's attack on the Jews[3]. It passed on information from the BSP about their industrial history and economics classes[4].

The Glasgow Trades Council was still a 'parliament': a discussion body, but not a government. Neither between 1910 and 1914 nor during World War 1 did it intervene in any dispute involving skilled workers,[5] and its leadership tended to come from the Scottish-based unions or national general unions rather than from the skilled tradesmen of the ASE or boilermakers[6]. It also had within its ranks a sizeable minority of trade unionists opposed to the Workers' Election Committee[7], and from 1906 the Glasgow Federation of the ILP increasingly took over the Trades Council's earlier role as campaigning centre on local political questions like housing.

1. Glasgow Trades Council, Minutes, January 25 1911.
2. Ibid, December 14 1910.
3. Ibid, October 21 1913.
4. Ibid, October19 1910, September 17 1913 it distributed BSP leaflets.
5. During the boilermakers' lockout of September 1910 the Trades Council focused on organising a relief fund for the platers' labourers, collecting just over £400, of which half was paid over to the Goven platers' labourers and the rest divided between Partick, Whiteinch and Glasgow. See Glasgow Trades Council, Annual Report. 1910-11, p.20. It did not see its role as supporting the large craft unions, nor did it wish to involve itself in organising the unskilled alongside these craft trade unionists.
6. H. McShane and J. Smith, op cit p.102.
7. Glasgow Trades Council, Minutes, August 31 1910: The vote to send two delegates to a Workers' Election Committee Conference was carried by 69 to 24. Ibid, November 30 1910: The Trades Council decided against issuing an election manifesto.

Syndicalism

The gap left by the Trades Council's reluctance to organise the semi- and unskilled who worked alongside tradesmen was one that a "syndicalist" current could attempt to fill. From 1906 Socialist Labour Party members attempted to organise the semi-skilled engineering workers at Singer's Kilbowie Road factory in Clydebank. The dispute which began there in March 1910 became a test of 'Industrial Unionism'. This attempt to establish an Industrial Union, involving all grades of workers, men and women, in a factory the skilled unions had failed to organise, posed a different challenge to syndicalism than did the Liverpool transport strike.

The background to the Singer's strike was,

> "The speeding up of machines and the consequent increase of tension on the worker; the cutting of wages by breaking prices; the introduction of machinery which had the effect of displacing large numbers of workers; the callous organisation of the workers with a view to economy; the increased cost of living (recognised by the capitalist economists); added to all this, the industrial crisis that we have just passed through, left the workers even more completely at the mercy of the masters."[1]

The strike was called over a disputed price in the cabinet polishing department where some 15 girls worked. But it was actually about collective bargaining:

> "If it is true, as it is said,that the Singer Company pay a third higher rate of wage than the average employer it is also true that the value of the Singer worker's product is many times greater than that of the workers of any other firm. All we contend for is that if we are compelled to do extra work or higher qualities of work we should receive an extra price. This does not necessarily mean an increase in the minimal wage."[2]

1. The Socialist, May 1911.
2. The Socialist, May 1911.

A small group of SLP members had been meeting inside the factory for some five years, forming an Industrial Union Group in 1910 which affiliated to the Industrial Workers of the World, Great Britain, in January 1911. The Strike Committee of five delegates from each department met at the SLP's Clydebank rooms. It grew to represent 37 out of the 41 departments in Singers[1], and as it grew the IWW(GB) became a minority.

The strike was defeated when Singer sent every worker a letter to be signed and returned in one day which read:

> "I wish to resume my work, and agree to do so on the day and hour which may be arranged by you, when you can assure me that at least six thousand persons have signed this agreement."[2]

The Strike Committee asked for the cards to be returned with "Refer to Strike Committee" written on them. But when the 'neutral' Clydebank Provost Taylor counted the cards, the vote was 6,527 for the return with 4,025 referred to the Strike Committee.[3]

The SLP drew several lessons from the defeat: it pointed out that "political Labour" had been present in Clydebank for the previous ten years but had made no attempt to organise the workers[4] and that the engineers had to be called scabs in order to get them out[5]. Defending

1. Ibid, April and May 1911.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid. The office staff at Singer's was included in the count; the Strike Committee also complained it was hampered by not having the home addresses of the strikers and having to contact them in one day by local publicity over a radius of 15 miles.
4. Rob Roy, Forward's right-wing columnist, was a Clydebank doctor. See John McNair: James Maxton-Beloved Rebel. Blackfriars Press, Leicester (1955) p.48.
5. The Socialist, July 1911. Ibid, May 1911, described the reputation of the Engineers, "the blue blood of the working class, the aristocracy of labour (which) stinks in the nostrils."

its intervention, the SLP believed they would have won a majority to stay out if they had had the workers' home addresses, and that they hadn't recruited enough members to the IWW(GB) in the first place[1]. This weakness highlighted the problem that the pure Industrial Union was both "industrial" and, effectively, socialist at the same time, making mass membership before a strike very difficult to achieve. So after the Singer's defeat, the SLP retreated from dual unionism to making propaganda within the existing unions for Industrial Unionism.

The SLP's syndicalism was extremely theoretical by comparison with Liverpool's. It was totally opposed to state socialism and state legislation, but did not oppose parliamentary candidates or the parliamentary road to power[2]. It derided Mann's theory of the "General Strike' and totally opposed agitation outside the workplace, whether against unemployment, for women's suffrage or on Ireland. The SLP"s theory of the role of the political party was that ofDe Leon[3] they saw nothing automatic about socialism and believed it necessary to have a revolutionary party in order both to "save the Industrial Union from corruption and decadence"[4] and also to make socialist propaganda. They therefore stood candidates in municipal elections on the basis that although municipal reforms were an illusion, the local election "gives the workers an opportunity and a means of organising and drilling themselves as a class for the parliamentary elections."[5]

1. Ibid, July 1911.
2. The SLPsplit in 1909 when some branches fused with Tom Mann, and again in 1911-12 when six branches were expelled over the SLP's contention that a political party was needed. See H.R. Vernon, The SLP and the Working Class Movement on the Clyde, 1903-21, Leeds M.Phil., 1967, p.100-102.
3. R. Challinor The Origins of British Bolshevism, 1977 p.30-31, 112-113.
4. The Socialist, May 1908
5. Ibid, October 1908.

Notwithstanding this, the political field was clearly subordinate[1] and increaingly some SLP members began to see Industrial Unionism as a theory for creating an alternative system of power within capitalism which would eventually take over[2].

The SLP's hostility to Tom Mann meant it made no real assessment of the 1911 Liverpool strike wave except when the Liverpool workers stood together and ignored the advice of "the crafty Tom Mann"[3]. Thus although they republished Mann's "Open letter to British Soldiers" in April 1912, as part of their campaign to defend freedom of speech, they used the agitation to release Mann to make very explicit their differences with him[4]. This hostility to Mann and "syndicalism" was a response to the growing attraction of that current compared to the SLP[5].

1. Ibid, March 1912, for example carried an article ascribing the defeat of the Paris Commune to the absence of an Industrial Union: "The fundamental weakness of the Commune lay in the fact that the French working class was not economically organised...the institution of a new order of society such as that pursued by the Socialist Movement cannot be improvised on the spur of the moment, or brought into being by degrees".

2. A view summarised in T. L. Smith, Industrial Unionism, Industrial Workers of Great Britain, not dated - probably 1918, by which time this perspective was held rigidly by the SLP.

3. The Socialist, September 1911.

4. Ibid, May 1912, quoted the Syndicalist of March-April 1912 - "The essence of syndicalism is the control by the workers themselves of the conditions of their work" - and that this control would be gained through a General Strike. It commented: "How simple! How the capitalist must laugh", and asked if the capitalists were arresting the syndicalists to promote their ideas. They argued that the syndicalists had no conception of the need to capture the political machine or take part in socialist propaganda: "Syndicalists are trying a game that Karl Marx characterised as trying to revolutionise society behind its back".

5. R. Challinor, op cit, p.109-110, describes the expulsions and splits from which the SLP suffered between 1909 and 1912.

Yet the SLP's opposition to campaigning activity outside the workplace led it to stand aside from the unemployed struggles[1] and to believe that all immediate issues could only be resolved by building the Industrial Union. This was also true of its attitude to Irish Home Rule. In October 1912, however, while reporting on the Midlothian by-election, The Socialist argued:

> "A significant feature of the contest was the practical absence of the Home Rule Question... impression is that the Party bosses on both sides have come to an agreement that Home Rule is to be allowed through, if possible by the Present Government, and, if not, under another name by the succeeding Tory administration".

Written at the height of Carson's Covenant campaign it presents a simple economic determinist explanation: the moneylenders who had opposed Home Rule in the 1810s and 1890s did so no longer because Wyndham's Land Purchase Act had settled the land question. This abstentionist approach to the Irish question was one of the reasons why James Connolly, a former SLP organiser, drew closer to the ILP than the SLP when he returned from America to Ireland and became organiser of the Socialist Party of Ireland[2].

1. The SLP considered joining the 1908 unemployed agitation in Glasgow. 3 branch members "while agreeing with the general attitude suggest the possibility of cutting into the surplus value of the master class by gaining concessions through demonstrating", but The Socialist, October 1908 continued: "The finding, however, was unanimous. The Party's position must be to hold aloof and maintain their well known attitude of pointing to the only remedy - economic revolution... Socialism is the only hope of the workers; all else is illusion". In 1909 Neil Maclean was expelled for joining an Edinburgh Right to Work Committee on the grounds of 'reformist deviations'. See Challinor, ibid.

2. B.C. Ransom, James Connolly and the Scottish Left, 1890-1916, PhD, Edinburgh, 1975, p.147-167 passim. Ransom argues the ILP's greater concern with Ireland was because of its interest in the Irish vote in Scotland, p.192-236 passim; but Home Rule was also a part of the ILP's radical Liberal heritage. In 1911 Connolly began to write a series of articles for Forward about Belfast and the issue of municipal elections.

The SLP's narrow focus on the class struggle in the workplace also led it to adopt a negative attitude to women's suffrage. During the early debates about votes for women in 1907 and 1908, the SLP was primarily concerned with defining its attitude to the family, where they supported the De Leon rather than the Connolly position[1]. But in 1912 when the Suffragette movement erupted into militancy, the SLP's response was to the right of Tom Johnston and Forward. The Socialist opened[2] the question by discussing Engels' 'Origins of the Family'. In March 1912 it reported the SLP majority position in favour of the "Adult Suffrage" position, and in May it asked: "Would the working women be any better off with the vote?" and answered in the negative:

> "We therefore conclude by saying that all movements, other than the movements that train and culture the working class for the revolution are useless"[3].

Later it published John S. Clarke's attack:

> "The Suffragette, consciously and unwittingly is the prize liar in public life today... Fatuously ignorant or wilfully corrupt, the Suffragette seeks to win support from the working class in order to buttress her own economic security. It behoves every class-conscious socialist to strenuously place before the workers the only proposition that will permanently benefit the whole of mankind - Socialism"[4].

1. The Socialist, May 1908 contained the SLP Press statement: "Under Socialism women would have the choice of family or any other form of domestic life just as she has now, theoretically, but with the difference that she would not be forced to thrust her children into the factory as working class women now have to".
2. Ibid, February 1912.
3. Ibid, May 1912.
4. Ibid, July 1912. This attack came at the moment the suffragettes were fighting the 'Cat and Mouse' Act, and Mann's Syndicalist was supporting Lansbury's defence of the suffragettes. In January 1914 Jane Matheson wrote to The Socialist attacking Clarke's anti-suffragette attitude. Clarke's reply was so insulting that he was forced to resign as Editor.

In 1912 it was not only Tom Mann's syndicalism and the suffragettes who were attacked by the SLP. With the build up to the 1912 municipal elections, described as "a Municipal General Election" because of the reorganisation of Glasgow's City boundaries, the SLP attacked Forward's municipal socialism in a further article by John S. Clarke[1].

Despite the SLP's sectarianism, its propaganda efforts and workplace orientation played a part in bringing about the development of workshop committees in Glasgow. But it encouraged them in circumstances which were already favourable. The Clydeside engineers had already developed an extremely democratic union structure[2] and the key personnel in creating workshop committees were not always SLP members[3].

The influence of syndicalism was also not confined in Glasgow

1. The Socialist, September 1912. Clarke argued that the abolition of landlordism wouldn't benefit the workers but the capitalists because they would no longer have to share income with the rentier. He defended strikes: "If workers were to follow your advice and cease regulating (by strikes) the price of their labour power, they would very soon be in a similar plight to the Chinese and Indian coolie." And he attacked the ILP's "third mania - state ownership", arguing "nationalisation is capitalism just the same and you know it".

2. R. Croucher, op cit, p.29 who argues that Glasgow workshop delegates had a high degree of autonomy in both the 1897-8 lockout and 1903 strike.

3. R. Challinor, op cit, p.104, assumes it was McManus (SLP) who built the workshop committee at Weir's, whereas McShane, who was briefly a shop steward there, recalls the personnel were largely ILP members with the committee's centre being James Messor, an ILP member who later became Secretary of the Clyde Workers' Committee. See J McShane & J. Smith, op cit, p.59.

to the ranks of the SLP. Members of both the ILP and the SDP (BSP from 1911) were strongly influenced by the industrial unrest of 1910-1914 and began to develop new understandings of the relationship between industrial and parliamentary work. Tom Mann, for example, was a frequent speaker in Glasgow at the Clarion Scouts' Pavilion venue, and there was considerable support for him[1].

1. There were three meetings held in Glasgow over Mann's imprisonment. Between 7 and 8,000 attended the first on Glasgow Green, despite the short notice with which it was called. See: Justice, March 30 1912.

British Socialist Party

In 1903 the split of the SLP from the SDF had left one branch of the SDF in Glasgow. But by 1911 Glasgow was the strongest centre for the SDP outside London. In 1911 there were six branches in Glasgow and one in Govan[1], and branches were being established in outerlying areas such as Pollockshaws[2]. John Maclean, a leading SDP member, was one of the best known Marxists in the entire area. He not only gave winter lectures on Marxist economics in Glasgow, but spent his summer holidays on propaganda tours, often in the mining areas of Fife and Lanarkshire.[3]

The foundation of the BSP in October 1911 was the final outcome of the debate on the Labour Alliance.[4] Grayson's call for a new Socialist party was made in August 1911[5] and 219 delegates attended the Manchester Socialist Unity conference.[6] In Glasgow no ILP branches went over to the BSP, although individual members did[7], and it was seen as a continuation of the SDP.

1. Justice, January 28 1911. There were 48 London branches, 4 in Manchester, 2 in Salford, 4 in Leeds. There were 3 branches in Liverpool and one in Birkenhead, but the addresses of the two secretaries of the East Liverpool and Kirkdale and Everton branches were both in Bootle. The six Glasgow branches were Anderston, Kinning Park, Parkhead, South-side, East and College: the last three had their own SDP rooms.
2. N. Maclean, op cit, p.33, 39.
3. Ibid, p 66-67.
4. See above, p.334-5. Forward, August-September 1910, carried a debate on the Labour Alliance between Maclean and Tom Johnston. Johnston argued that because the Labour Party was the "wage-earners' party" it was the heir to the British Marxist tradition and the Labour Alliance (Labour Party, ILP and unions) should continue. Maclean argued for a united Socialist party.
5. In the Clarion, August 1911.
6. 41 delegates were from the ILP, 31 from Clarion Scouts, 86 from the SDP, 48 from local socialist and representation committees, and 12 from branches of the B SP which had already been formed. See: Justice, October 7th 1911.
7. Harry McShane was one.

The enthusiasm which greeted the Socialist Unity call existed because within all the socialist groups there were currents looking for an open socialist alternative to the ILP with a strategy embracing both industrial and political work; and the SDP/BSP appeared close to fitting the bill.[1] Towards the end of 1911 and beginning of 1912 Maclean's column in Justice (Gael's Scottish Notes) began to articulate a combined industrial and political strategy, although there were remnants of the old SDP positions still present.[2] Thus Maclean commented upon the Singer's strike:

> "All social democrats are industrial unionists. We differ from others in that we insist real industrial organisation must arise out of the fusion and federation of already existing Trades Unions..... And, furthermore, we rightly insist that economic organisation is subject to political organisation....."3

One and a half years later, Maclean had clarified his conception of the new strategy which opposed both MacDonald's "all politics" and the syndicalists' "all industrial" positions. For Maclean the object of both political and industrial activity was what was decisive:

> "We must have political and industrial action but the essential is that all working class action must be guided by the principles and tactics of Revolutionary Socialism, having for its object the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a co-operative commonwealth." 4

1. Justice, August 19 1911, had greeted the Liverpool transport strike with the headline:"Class war in Liverpool", although the Hyndman wing of the SDP still believed: "From a socialist point of view there was little good in the strikes except as an indication of a revolution against present economic conditions and a manifestation of class solidarity." See Justice, October 14 1911.
2. Such as the argument that voting Liberal or Tory was identical. But by March 29 1912, Justice, suggests his position on this question has changed: "My case for voting against the Liberals breaks down".
3. April 15 1911, quoted in N. Milton, op cit, p.52.
4. Justice, October 11 1913.

Maclean's was not an abstract Industrial Unionism, nor was it similar to the ILP's, which separated trade union work from ILP electoral socialism. Maclean used his political column to agitate for those on strike[1] and to generalise the issues involved. Thus he saw in the spate of women's textile strikes in 1910-1911, that :

> "All this speaks eloquently for the good feeling which more and more characterises the workers along the Clyde, and betokens a new spirit that must culminate in great things ere long".[2]

In the docks dispute of 1912 Maclean argued that the dockers should demand the Government take over :

> "So far as I can see this is perhaps the best way to knit up immediate economic and immediate political action."[3]

He also commented upon the craft unions, arguing in January 1911 that the boilermakers should take on the Shipbuilders' Federation[4] and pointing out which candidates for ASE organisers were BSP members to be supported by Justice readers[5].

The first BSP Conference agreed[6] a resolution stressing the complementary character of "the political and industrial organisation of the working class" and that BSP members should join and become active

1. December 23 1911. Maclean described the United Turkey Red strike praising the Dyers, Bleachers and Finishers and Kindred Trades union for organising women, men and boys in the Vale of Leven, and the craft unions for supporting their fellow workers by striking, and at the Argyll Motor works by collecting money.
2. Justice, December 23 1911
3. Ibid, January 27 1912.
4. Ibid, January 9 1911.
5. Ibid, August 24 1912. Before World War 1, the ILP never used to advertise which ASE candidates were ILP members
6. Ibid, June 1 1912. Hyndman's speech was somewhat different- he defined socialist struggles as the struggle for free maintenance of children, co-operative organisation of the unemployed, a minimum wage and the 8 hour day, arguing "such measures properly used were stepping stones to peaceful revolution".

in the trades unions.[1] Before World War 1, Maclean himself shared this implicit evolutionary/parliamentary approach:

> "The state is the natural outgrowth of growing economic structure of expanding society, and upon it, in rapidly increasing numbers, devolves duties formerly undertaken in a voluntary manner. It is only consistent with impartial scientific survey to carry forward this growth of the duties of the state until the social revolution has been accomplished." [2]

Thus Maclean shared the SLP's perspective of using the elections as a propaganda forum, and criticised the ILP for hiding its socialism in the 1911 municipal elections:

> "Most of these fights do not count for much as Socialism - in fact, even municipal capitalism - was carefully stored away from public scrutiny." [3]

Maclean, however, did not share the SLP's intransigent attitude to "palliatives". Like Wheatley, he believed the critical issue in Glasgow washousing. He therefore argued that the ten Glasgow Labour Councillors should deal first with the reinstatement of the victimised railwaymen and get them all 30 shillings a week for a 44 hour week; then reduce the fares; and finally used the rest of the Tramway surplus to erect

1. Ibid: "The main function of the Socialist Party, however, is the organisation of an independent political party of the working class, aimed at the conquest of power by that class, as the political expression of the working class movement, and as a means to its final emancipation..... It is idle for the workers to strike or vote for better conditions of life unless they are prepared to take steps for the holding and working of the common means of life by and for the workers collectiv ely. Therefore we call upon all trade unionists to join the British Socialist Party in order to be able to use their political rights effectively; and we urge every member of the Party who is eligible to become a member of a trade union."

2. Ibid, April 15 1911.

3. Justice, November 11 1912.

workmen's cottages, because bad housing was the major problem in the city[1]. The differences between the BSP and ILP were thus largely theoretical in 1912[2], all Glasgow's major socialist organisations accepted one evolutionary theory of the state or another[3], whether through municipal and parliamentary socialism or industrial unionism or a combination of all three.[4]

This approach to the state led Maclean to take an evolutionary approach to organisation. He didn't see his task as building a political party to intervene in all working class organisations, but rather to enter and transform those organisations. Thus in 1911 Maclean spoke at the Renfrewshire Co-Operative Society[5] and was pleased when they decided to study economics themselves:

> "Splutters who fancy themselves fire brand revolutionaries may, and no doubt will, spurn such suggestions of work and application of Marxian principle, but the sober-minded,

1. Ibid. Maclean is uniting the kind of demands Mann is raising with those of Wheatley. This explains why Maclean generally did not attack left ILPers such as Johnston, Wheatley and Shinwell, but did attack the right-wing ILP members such as Rob Roy, the Forward columnist - Justice, November 11 1911 called a "Slavish apologist for MacDonald reactionism" - and ILP councillors, like Alston and Turner.

2. Justice, for example launched a competition to find the best municipal election leaflet and published the five best. They were headed: 1. "To save the Children"; 2. "Socialism and the Rates"; 3. "Municipality and its Employees"; 4. "Public Baths and Wash-houses"; 5. "To get good homes for all". See Ibid, October 19 1912.

3. Even Guy Aldred's direct action group of anarchists believed Parliament had to be captured first and then abolished.

4. It was only during World War 1, having taken Second International Marxism to its limits, that Maclean transformed himself and in doing so created an entire generation of 'good sense' Marxists.

5. On the problem of price rises and the outpacing of Co-operative expansion by the growth of mutiple shops.

> who have a well-grounded and rational grip of all that a world-wide social revolution involves, comprehend that anything we can possibly do to hasten on the revolution of production and the minds of the masses at the same time ought to be done thoroughly and expeditiously"[1].

Maclean and the BSP shared the ILP's "adult suffrage" position on the women question, arguing for full adult enfranchisement of both men and women rather than votes for women immediately on the same terms as men. Thus Justice disagreed with the resolutions carried by several BSP and ILP branches in October 1912 demanding the Labour Party oppose the Liberal Government on every occasion until it gave votes to women:

> "It is rather extreme, however, that Socialist organisations should demand such independent action on the part of the Labour Party on this question, and not on others of more importance to the working class - Unemployment and the Insurance scheme for instance"2.

Within the BSP, however, there was the same division as occurred in the ILP. Edith Watson wrote in the same issue of Justice attacking the BSP for its apathy towards "The Link, a paper superior in every way to Justice". She also accused the BSP leadership of "sex antagonism" and argued:

> "Socialism will not be worth having unless free women have helped to bring it about"[3].

1. Justice, December 1 1911. Although Maclean by 1913 is arguing for the "overthrow of capitalism" - see above, p. 421 - he remains committed to the idea that this would happen through the transformation of the combined strength of the existing working class organisations. See: Ibid, June 8 1912.
2. Ibid, October 19 1912.
3. Justice, October 19 1912

The BSP blamed lack of support for its London demonstration for adult suffrage on the militancy of the suffragettes:

> "The indefensible hooliganism of a few irresponsible viragoes should not be allowed to modify or weaken our demand for the political enfranchisement of all men and women"[1].

But Maclean, along with Lansbury and Mann, applauded their militancy. When two women were arrested in Glasgow about to burn down a house, Maclean wrote he had little sympathy with burning houses but he admired their "pluck to show their utter contempt for the Scottish Court"[2], and added: "We appeal to the women to line up with us"[3].

The BSP supported Irish Home Rule. Hyndman wrote in 1911:

> "We social-democrats are and always have been Home Rulers, and have continued to advocate that policy in spite of the bitter antagonism of the Parliamentary Irish clique to us for a quarter of a century. We have done this because we believe Home Rule to be just and right in itself. But also because until this natural aspiration is satisfied, Socialism cannot make way as it ought on the other side of the Irish Channel"[4].

When Carson re-visited Glasgow in 1913, Maclean commented, "We are not proud that Ulstermen are of Scottish descent"[5] and argued that Scottish workers were generally as favourable to Home Rule for Ireland as they were to Home Rule for Scotland.

By the beginning of 1913, however, the initial impetus that witnessed the launching of the BSP had been largely dissipated by its

1. Ibid, January 11 1913. It might, perhaps have been more accurate to have blamed the poor attendance upon its own ambivalence. On February 8 1913, for example, Justice printed a letter from "Socialisticus, Liverpool" arguing against votes for women.
2. Ibid, October 25 1913.
3. Ibid.
4. Justice, September 2 1911.
5. Ibid, June 21 1913.

London leadership. Many members preferred the direct action paper, the Daily Herald[1], to Justice and Maclean tried to produce his own paper, the Vanguard, as the organ of the Scottish Committee of the BSP[2]. But in addition to the national weaknesses of the BSP, the Glasgow BSP also faced a strong, left Glasgow ILP in a city whose 'commonsense' thought was still Liberal.

1. Ibid, March 1 1913 contains an appeal from H. W. Lee, BSP Treasurer, saying the Daily Herald had now got its £11,000, so would BSP members please look after their own paper. Harry McShane recalls reading the Daily Herald and Forward in preference to Justice, See: Mcshane & Smith, op cit, p.29-30.
2. Justice, April 26 1913, reports the initial run of Vanguard as 13,000.

The ILP and Municipal Socialism before 1914

The years before the First World War did not weaken the ILP in Glasgow as occurred elsewhere and its municipal election strategy appeared justified. In November 1911 Labour gained four seats on the City Council making a Labour group of ten[1]. In 1912, although Labour lost three seats, because of the city extension to include Govan, Partick and Shettleston, the actual Labour group increased to 12 and for the first time included John Wheatley[2]. It then hammered out a united policy[3] and began to work coherently. It was helped in this by the formation in March 1912 of a Glasgow Central Labour Party to replace the earlier Workers' Election Committee[4].

Between February and July 1913 the Central Labour Party and the Labour group worked out a full municipal socialist programme on municipal income tax, liquor, rates, corporation works, and on municipal banking, laundries, milk, coal distribution and bread.[5] On September 30 1913 Wheatley's contentious proposal to use the Tramway

1. Forward, November 11 1911.
2. Ibid, November 9 1912, attributed the losses to a united attack by the Catholic Glasgow Observer, the temperence groups and the "anti-socialists". Wheatley's election was bitterly opposed by the Irish Nationalists. He was denounced in his own parish church and a Catholic mob burnt an effigy of him outside his own home in June. See ibid, July 6 1912.
3. Wheatley made the proposal for building £8 municipal cottages from the Tramway surplus a test of membership of the Labour group.
4. The Workers' Election Committee had been a loose alliance rather than a party machine. The CLP involved the Women's Labour League, the Fabian Society, the Co-operative Defence Association, the Registration Committe, and the Govan, Partick, Hutchestown, Central and Camlachie Labour Representation Committees.
5. The programme included the proposal for a municipal bank because the working class were only getting 2½ per cent interest whereas the City was paying out 5 per cent on the money it borrowed. The item debated most was the issue of the municipal control of drink. Middlemas, op cit, p.53-56.

surplus to build municipal cottages to rent at £8 a year[1] was finally endorsed, and Wheatley's leadership was then confirmed by the 1913 municipal elections: there were six gains and two losses[2], and with two by-election gains, by July 1914 the Labour group had 18 members.

These results strengthened the evolutionary perspective of the whole Glasgow socialist movement. Thus Maclean believed that the £8 cottage scheme meant "...it will not take long till the working class capture an actual majority"[3], and in June 1914 noted a revival of the BSP in Glasgow[4].

The ILP's municipal socialist wing was also strengthened by the outcome of the ongoing debate about political or industrial action that took place between 1910 and 1914. At first many ILP members had been sympathetic to Tom Mann's stress on industrial direct action[5]. But when Mann emerged from the 1911 Liverpool transport strike totally opposed to political action, both right and left wing ILPers in Glasgow united to condemn syndicalism, O'Connor Kessack supported the Labour Party against the strike weapon. He argued that the transport strike was an "accident", that the Singer's strike was badly led and attacked Tom Mann:

1. It was contentious because previously the Tramway surplus had been used to cut fares and because Wheatley opposed slum clearance unless alternative accommodation was provided. When the £8 cottages scheme came to the Glasgow Trades Council it was adopted, but Shinwell protested that it should have been discussed on the Trades Council before being adopted by the CLP. Glasgow Trades Council, Minutes, October 1 1913.
2. Maclean argued that the two losses were because Lyons and Carsons, the defeated Labour councillors, had absented themselves from the crucial vote when the £8 cottage scheme was defeated by 40 votes to 39 on the Corporation. Two wards were very nearly captured, one of which was Pollockshields, where a BSP member lost by only 101 votes. See : Justice, November 15 1913.
3. Ibid, July 2 1914.
4. Ibid, June 11, June 18 1914.
5. Ransom, op cit, p.215-225, argues Tom Johnston was Mann's most fervent supporter in Glasgow before 1911.

> "At first Tom Mann was of opinion that politics might be of some use: but now he had turned them down. This syndicalism was simply a new form of Capitalism. The railwaymen were to own the railways, the seamen the ships, and the dockers would be left with nothing (laughter)."[1]

Tom Johnston, sharing many of the syndicalists' socialist assumptions, attacked them from a different viewpoint in two major articles in 1912:

> "Time is on the side of the Parliamentarians. Insurrectionism is unnecessary, useless, and vicious on the very day the worker is given the vote."[2]

The example he chose to demonstrate how "unnecessary" was the syndicalist approach was the success of the German Social Democratic Party which, he suggested, could be turned against war. In his second article Johnston argued that success in elections could bring about nationalisation and that this would strengthen the socialist ranks:

> "Give us Nationalisation of the Railways, and we'll have another million civil servants, looking to Parliament for improvements in their conditions, voting Labour, and quite apart from the immediate financial benefits they obtain under state control, more inclined to link up with the Socialist movement... "Look at Germany. One man in every four a State servant, and one man in every three (and the proportion steadily increasing) voting socialist. In Glasgow there are more Socialist and Labour voters among the municipal employees than among any other class in the community."[3]

In Glasgow, unlike Liverpool, political action appeared effective and this reinforced the existing Glasgow 'commonsense' against both

1. Forward, February 10 1912.
2. "Why I am not a syndicalist" in Forward, March 30 1912.
3. Forward, June 8 1912. It was also possible for Glasgow socialists to draw their own comparison of the tramwaymen in Glasgow and Liverpool. Both groups had struck and been victimised in 1911. In Glasgow they had struck again in 1913 for a 60-hour week and 28 shillings a week. But in 1914 the Labour Group got their hours cut from 54 to 51 and a minimum wage for all Glasgow municipal workers of 27 shillings. See Justice: June 11 1914.

"insurrectionism" and religious and anti-socialist sectarianism.

The emergence of a more confident Labour movement in Glasgow allied with the success of Labour candidates against the UIL in Dublin[1] prompted four distinct challenges from alternative 'commonsenses' in 1912. An anti-socialist group developed within the Progressive Alliance on the Council[2]; the Catholic Church and UIL attacked the socialists[3]; the Liberals made a return with a land and a temperance campaign[4]; and the Conservatives played the Orange card. All four challenges failed to dent the Glasgow Liberal 'commonsense' held together as it was by Labour organisations.

The contrast with Liverpool was most marked at the time of Carson's Covenant campaign. Glasgow's Liberal commonsense isolated and controlled the Orange Order, not because it had fewer hard-core supporters than in Liverpool, but because it denied the Orange Order exclusive organisational routes into the mass of the skilled working class.

1. Forward, January 27 1911, greeted the Dublin results with the headline "Great Socialist sweep in Ireland." The Labour candidates won 4 out of 6 wards against the UIL. It described this victory as the "real Home Rule uprising" and the posters it produced, "Socialists sweep Ireland, Larkin elected in Dublin", provoked the initial exchange with the Catholic Glasgow Observer which explained they were Labour, not socialist gains.

2. A series of pamphlets attacking municipal and state socialism was produced in 1912: 'The Patriot creed: an antidote to the poisonous teachings of the Red Catechism' from the Anti-Socialist Union, was one. Another was called 'Exposure of the Socialist Conspiracy'. They came to nothing. Indeed, an attempt to launch a strikebreaking force in Glasgow during the 1912 miners' strike was treated with contempt and ridicule by Forward, March 30, April 6 1912.

3. See above, p.427 footnote (2).

4. They made this attempt in areas of growing socialist strength. See Forward, September 28 1912. Forward, August 31 1912 countered this Liberal Party offensive by printing a list of Liberal capitalists and the 73 peers created by the Liberal Government since 1906.

Forty thousand marched on the West of Scotland's 1912 July Orange walk in Coatbridge, with special trains from Glasgow as well as the iron and steel towns around[1]. Its location in a Catholic town was particularly provocative, and the Aidrie District Lodges were attacked on their way home[2]. In July a further provocation occurred when the world Triennial Conference of the Imperial Grand Order was held in Glasgow and the Corporation gave it an official reception on the grounds that the Loyal Orange Order was a friendly society which did much good work[3].

Yet Carson's visit to Glasgow in October was pitiful by comparison with Belfast and Liverpool[4] - 5,000 were at St. Andrew's Hall and 2,000 at an overflow meeting. Even the speech Carson gave was different:

> "Sir Edward Carson was scrupulously careful to develop his argument on the political and economic side and to refrain from any reference to the religious differences which separate North-East Ulster from the South and West of Ireland".[5]

His appeal was to democracy, to loyalty and for support for the great municipality of Belfast in the name of the shipyard and dock workers of Belfast. Although 8,700 people signed the Covenant in just three days, there was no promise of ships and an admiral. Carson's speech was milder than the Glasgow Herald's editorial[6].

1. Glasgow Herald, July 8 1912. The special trains from Glasgow came from Rutherglen, Whiteinch, Govan, Maryhill and Partick.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid, July 17,18 1912. Baillie Paxton, who presided, said when "..the Corporation agreed to entertain the Council it was because of the knowledge the Corporation possessed of the friendly society part of the Council's organisation. They did not in the Corporation recognise anything in the political or party spirit."
4. 80,000 saw Carson off from Belfast, a similar number attended his Liverpool meeting.
5. Glasgow Herald, October 2 1912.
6. Ibid.

The same evening as Carson's meeting a special meeting of the United Free Presbytery of Glasgow was held. This refused to discuss a resolution expressing "unqualified hostility (in consonance with the tradition of our Church) to any measure which might tend to the supremacy of the Papacy in any part of the Kingdom".[1] The reluctance of the Free Church to enter the political arena of Irish Home Rule was indicated by the large majority this refusal received and by its further decision not to send any messages of sympathy to Irish Presbyterians[2].

The hierarchy of the Catholic Church in Glasgow were also reluctant to get involved in the 1912 Home Rule debate. A priest initially barred the Michael Davitt UIL branch from using the hall adjacent to the St. Francis League of the Cross Mission for a Home Rule meeting. The ban was only lifted when the entire parish refused to give their weekly donations to the collectors, and,

> "a compromise was reached whereby the meeting took place but the resolution supporting Irish Home Rule wasn't put."[3]

The ILP paid the Covenant campaign little direct attention. But when it did it came out unequivocably for Home Rule. Thus even before Carson arrived in Glasgow Tom Johnston launched an attack on the Orange minority for inventing the Catholic bogey. Sectarian bitterness, he wrote,

1. Glasgow Herald, October 2 1912.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid, October 21 1912.

"is confined to a small area between Belfast and Londonderry and in rural Ulster is practically non-existent. In Donegal where the Catholics are overwhelmingly preponderant, I could discover no Protestant who alleged a single instance of Catholic intimidation or oppression or undue influence on public boards... In Donegal there is no exclusiveness, no boycotting, no sectarian strife of any kind...

"As for the priests, my honest testimony is that they are a much maligned body of men. They are almost entirely sons of the peasantry, and those of them I met were as far removed from the crafty, deceitful, reactionary, superstitious, immoral bogey men of the Hope Trust lectures as it was possible to be."[1]

He went on to argue that Ireland's problem would be the "gombeen man" - the moneylender and small capitalist. Johnston's defence of Home Rule was essentially that of the Liberal tradition - and it did not go unchallenged. One reader wrote that he also supported Home Rule, but Johnston had ignored the sectarian and anti-socialist role of the Ancient Order of Hibernians[2], and was rosy-eyed about the role of the priests.

Johnston's visit to Ireland was one of many personal contacts[3] made between the Glasgow ILP and Belfast and Dublin. Connolly wrote for the Forward from Belfast, and it supported Larkin against Sexton

1. Forward, August 31 1912.
2. Ibid, September 21 1912. During the Dublin lockout the Ancient Order of Hibernians bitterly opposed Larkin. Its leader Joe Devlin, attempted to organise an alternative union to the Irish TGWU. See: Irish Worker, December 6 1913.
3. Harry Hopkins, Chairman of Govan LRC, visited Dublin during the Glasgow Fair holidays in 1911, and reported back to Govan Trades Council on the friendly reception he got from Larkin and the Dublin Trades Council. See: Irish Worker, August 19 1911.

and against the trumped-up fraud charge[1] and in his struggle to unionise Dublin. Larkin never abandoned political for pure direct action, having consistently run as a municipal candidate[2], and thus Forward was a natural ally at the time of the Dublin lockout.

By 1913, however, it was clear that the anti-socialist counter-attacks of the previous year had failed: the builders' labourers[3] went into struggle for the first time, inspiring the semi- and unskilled engineering workers and both groups enrolled in the Workers' Union run by ILP member George Kerr[4]. On May 1 1913 an unofficial strike for new piece rates took place in three Govan and three Partick shipyards[5] indicating the emergence of a co-ordinated shipyard rank and file movement.

Between September 1913 and January 1914 the Labour movement on the Clyde was primarily concerned with the Dublin lockout, organising

1. Forward, October 9, 16 1909, published "Larkin: a Life History. The Man whom Dublin Castle wants to Crush."

2. Both Larkin and Connolly were municipal socialists - as well as Irish "Home Rulers" and believers in direct action. The Irish Worker, September 28 1912, greeted a Dublin council by-election victory with the headline: "North Dock for Labour. Home Rule!" Connolly, The Reconquest of Ireland, first published 1917, 1972 ed. p. 17, wrote: "An Irish municipality elected by the male and female voters under the present suffrage ought to be, in its public activities, breadth of outlook, and comprehensiveness of ambition for the social well-being and mental enrichment of its inhabitants, a centre of pride to the Irish race, and a shining example of the possibilities of the future of Ireland under free and self-governing institutions."

3. The dispute involved 3,000 workers and won a rise from 5d. to 6½d. an hour. See: R. Hyman, The Workers' Union, D. Phil. p.88.

4 Maclean argues the building labourers' strike also brought out the labourers in Weirs who also joined the Workers' Union. See: Justice, May 24 1913.

5. Ibid, May 10 1913.

the largest collection outside of Dublin[1]. Forward was the centre of the collection, raising £3,000 in Glasgow (from socialist branches, workshop collections, at cinemas and at football gates and in the street) quite apart from official trade union donations. And it was the ILP which immediately organised demonstrations on behalf of the Dublin strikers and asked for speakers from the Glasgow Trades Council. The Trades Council sent two speakers[2], and later also sent speakers to ILP meetings where Larkin spoke[3].

As significant as the size of the collection was in Glasgow was what its organisation and breadth revealed of the Labour and socialist organisation, the connections between them and their relationships to the wider working class. Forward's Irish Subscription List appeared every week from September 13 1913 until February 14 1914 detailing who was sending in the money, and often, how much, who was giving it and how it was collected. Several thousand individuals' names and frequently addresses, union membership and workplace, appeared in this

1. The Irish Worker, Nov 8 1913-Mar 7 1914, published subscription lists to two funds: the Dublin Trades Council fund which generally received official national/regional trade union donations (e.g. Sexton sent £50 from Liverpool NUDL while O'Connor Kessack sent £100 from the Scottish dockers); and the Irish TGWU fund. These lists show the best workshop and local area collections were in Dublin and Glasgow. Liverpool's response through these channels was almost non-existent.

2. Glasgow Trades Council, Minutes, September 17 1913. The Trades Council also condemned the brutality of the Dublin police, but it was not prepared to carry a resolution proposed by McCall and seconded by Laurie Anderson, a BSP member, for the recall of Lord Aberdeen and Mr A. Birrell, Chief Secretary for Ireland.

3. Ibid.

unique description of the Glasgow Labour movement's response to the Dublin workers' struggle.

Three significant points can be made from an analysis of the Forward Irish Subscription List. Firstly, the obvious point that it was the ILP and Forward which held hegemony in the West of Scotland Labour and Socialist movement. Not only was the ILP the most active organisation campaigning for support for the Dublin workers, but Forward was seen and accepted as the natural centre for collections from the while local radical movement. Thus a guinea collected at a Womens' Social and Political Union meeting on Glasgow Green was sent in to Forward[1], and unorganised groups such as "Sorting clerks at the GPO"[2], "a few clerks"[3], "from a tailor's workshop"[4] and "Glasgow telegraphists"[5] regularly sent in donations. Forward also received over a thousand direct individual donations from people who either chose to make their donation as an individual or, more probably, were not active members of any Labour or socialist group. These ranged from one shilling to a pound, with the larger donations involving the individual collecting from among his or her neighbours. Thus "a working man's wife, Parkhead" sent one shilling[6] while 33 people contributed to the once off nine shillings' collection sent in by William Oliver from the City area.[7]

1. Forward, October 25 1913. The 'Maryhill rebels" sent in three shillings.
2. Ibid, September 20 1913.
3. Ibid, October 11 1913. The "Wolfe Tone" Freedom Club, Port Glasgow sent in seven and sixpence.
4. Ibid, October 25 1913.
5. Ibid.
6. Forward, October 4 1913.
7. Ibid, September 27 1913.

Donations varied from a shilling down to a penny, and came from every quarter of Glasgow and its surrounds[1]. Local trade union branches held collections as well as making official donations through their District or National organisations, and these collections were also sent to Forward. The following table indicates the wide distribution of local trade union support for Forward's Subscription List:

1. Donations separately recorded came from: Exchange, Hutcheston, Gorbals, South Side, Springburn, Shettleston, Tollcross, Whiteinch, St.Rollox, Scotstoun, Pollokshaws, Partick, Plantation, Ruchill, Kingston, Langside, Kelvinside, Hillhead, Govanhill, Polmadie, Govan, Dalmarnock, Mile End, Bridgeton, Gallowgate, Parkhead, Cathcart, City, Crosshill, Anniesland, Dennistoun, Townhead, Yoker, Maryhill, Ibrox; and from surrounding suburbs and towns from: Clydebank, Rutherglen, Paisley, Cambuslang, Dalmuir, Kilbirnie, Dalry, Barrhead, Dalkeith, Kilsyth, Kilbowie, Bonnybriggs, Wishaw, Blantyre, Bishopbriggs, Larkhall, Greenock, and Motherwell.

Table 18

Trade union organisations appearing on the Forward Irish Subscription List, September 1913 to February 1914:

Category	Name of Organisation	No. of branches appearing on list	No.of separate donations recorded on list
Metal and Engineering	Scientific Instrument Makers' Association	1	8
	Patternmakers Society	3	3
	National Society of Copper-smiths, Braziers, etc	1	6
	Electrical Trades Union	1	1
	Sheet Metal Workers Society	4	9
	UK Society of Amalgamated Smiths and Strikers	1	1
	Amalgamated Society of Engineers	1	1
	Associated Blacksmiths' Society	3	4
	Amalgamated Society of Woodcutting Machinists	1	1
	Association of Iron Moulders	2	2
	British Steel Smelters' Assocation	11	24
	British Steel Smelters, Mill, Iron & Tinplate Workers Society	1	2
	Boilermakers and Iron & Steel Shipbuilders' Society	3	4
General	Scottish Oilworkers' Association	2	2
	National Amalgamated Union of Labour	4	7
	Gas and General Workers Union	3	8
	Municipal Employees Assocation	8	20
	The Workers' Union	3	4
	National Union of Clerks	1	1
	Amalgamated Medical Glass Bottlemakers' Association	1	1
Building Trades	Scottish Painters' Society	2	2
	Scottish Paviours Union	2	3
	Glasgow Journeyman Coopers' Protective Society	1	9
	Slaters' Union	1	3
	Carpenters and Joiners' Society	1	1
Print and	Scottish Black Printers	1	1
Textiles	Textile Workers' Union	3	3
	Amalgamated Society of Dyers	2	2
Mining	Lanarkshire County Miners' Union	7	11
	Fife & Kinross Miners' Association	1	1
Transport	National Union of Railwaymen	3	3
	National Union of Dock Labourers	8	16
	British Seafarers Union	1	1

Many groups of workers organised collections in their workplaces

and these also were sent in to Forward:

Table 19

Workplace collections appearing in the Forward Irish Subscription List,

September 1913 to February 1914:

Category	Name of Workplace and organisation where given	No. of separate donations recorded on list
Metal and Engineering	Albion - Brass turners	4
	Anderstoun Foundry	9
	Argyll Motors - bodyworkers, trimmers, machine shop - Alexandria	3
	Dubs (loco.works) - iron dressers and labourers	6
	Dundas St. Foundry	2
	Vulcan Works, Paisley	1
	Glasgow & South West Railway Works	1
	Howdens	2
	Jubilee Engineering Works	4
	Kelvin Motor Works	11
	Mavor and Coulson	11
	NBR Cowlair Works	1
	Russell & Co. Port Glasgow	2
	Torpedo Factory, Greenock	6
	Watson, Laidlow & Co. - painters	1
	Weirs - patternmakers, brass, heavy machine, piston valves, piston rod shops, night shift, day shift	19
	Mirlees, Watson & Co - smithy	1
	British Tube Works, Coatbridge	2
	Calder Steel & Iron Works, Coatbridge	1
	Clydebridge Steel Company, Cambuslang	2
	Glasgow Iron and Steel Works, Wishaw	1
	Imperial Tube Works, Airdrie	1
	Newton Steel & Iron Workers	1
	Stephen's, Linthouse - Rivetters	5
	P.W. M'Lellans	4
	Shieldhall Co-op Workers	1
	Fairfield Engine Shop	1
	Fairfield Shipyard	2
	Maclie & Thomson's	1
	Harland & Wölff	2
	Dunsmuir & Jackson	2
	Rowan's Boiler Shop	1
	Barclay & Curle, Whiteinch - Smithy	1

Table 19 (continued)

Category	Name of Workplace and organisation where given	No. of separate donations recorded on list
General	Barker Rennies (brush manufacturers)	2
	Blackie & Sons	1
	Brownlee & Co. City Saw Mills	1
	Henneys	1
	Kelvin, Bottomley & Baird	11
	Kelvin, White & Bottomley	1
	Shearer's Workshop	1
	Corporation Cleansing Department	1
Print and Textiles	Clarke & Buchans (tailors & furriers)	1
	Knox's Factory, Kilbirnie - pinners	1
	R. Anderson's Printers	1
Mining	Harthill	1
	Bellshill, No.24	2
	Coalburn, No.15	2
	Dixon's, No.26	1
	Nacherty	1
	Ponfeigh	1

Clearly, although the ILP had members in many of these workshops, it was not omnipresent. Members of other socialist organisation and members of none also collected in the workplace and saw Forward as the organising focus in Glasgow for solidarity.

The second significant point about the list is that contributions were made to it by all the socialist organisation in Glasgow. Some probably donated through their national parent body, others probably concentrated on collecting through the Trades Council, union, workshop or co-operative society. But, nonetheless, as the following list shows, all the Glasgow socialist groups from the BSP to the Anarchists also accepted Forward's role as organising centre:

Table 20 Political groups appearing on the Forward Irish Subscription List, September 1913 - February 1914

Name of Organisation	Name of Branch and Function at which collection was made		No. of Separate donations recorded on list
Independent Labour Party	Clydebank -	1	6
	Meeting with Trades Council	5	
	Kingston		4
	Govan Central		3
	Dunbarton -	6	7
	Women's collection in Alexandria	1	
	Greenock -	1	2
	Joint demo.with BSP and Town Council	1	
	Springburn -	1	2
	At a meeting with Tom Johnston	1	
	Bridgeton -	7	17
	Collections M'Phun's, Rutherglen pottery workers & Higginbottoms workers	10	
	Camlachie		1
	Blackfriars		1
	Dennistoun		1
	Coatbridge		1
	Glasgow -	3	6
	Meeting collection	1	
	Metropole collection	1	
	Dance collection	1	
	Paisley - Meetings		2
	Milngavie		1
	Maryhill		4
Labour Representation Committee	Tradeston		1
Forward Scouts	Glasgow -	4	14
	Barrel Organ collections	7	
	Football gate collections	3	
Clarion Scouts	Glasgow - meetings		3
	Bellshill		1
	Rutherglen		2
Daily Herald	Womens Labour League Govanhill (Mrs Messor, wife of James Messor of Weirs)		2
	Glasgow -		1
Women's Social and Political Union	Glasgow Green meeting		1
British Socialist Party	Greenock -	2	3
	Factory collection	1	
	Motherwell		2
	Kirkmuirhill		1
	Bonnyriggs		1
	Pollockshaws		1
	Strathaven		3
	Bowhill		1
	Musselburgh -Joint meeting with ILP and Anarchists		1
	Bushy		1

Table 20(continued)

Socialist Labour Party	Glasgow - several individual donations and weekly subscriptions	41
Industrial Workers of Great Britain	Glasgow	1
Glssgow Anarchist Group	Glasgow Green collections	2
Socialist Civil Service Society	Glasgow	1
Scottish Socialist Teachers' Society	Glasgow	1
Catholic Socialist Society	Glasgow	3
Socialist Sunday Schools	Paisley	2
	Bridgeton	15
	College	11

Finally, the Forward list reveals a significant difference between the Glasgow Trades Council and the Govan Trades Council in their relationship to the communities, workshops and union branches which fell within their respective areas. While the Glasgow Trades Council supported the Dublin workers, it encouraged its affiliates to organise support rather than doing so itself. Forward lists only 8 separate donations from groups of Glasgow Trades Council delegates[1].

Govan Trades Council, on the other hand, was the main organiser of financial support in its area, which it then passed on to Forward. The key figure in organising this leading role was Harry Hopkins[2], the local ILP activist. Thus the Govan Trades Council issued its own collecting cards: at least 31 were filled up and returned. Some were completed in the streets and among neighbours; but this method

1. Forward, September 27, October 4, 25, November 1, 29, December 20 1913.
2. See p.433, footnote 3, above.

was also used to raise funds inside virtually every local shipyard and factory[1]. The Govan Trades Council also organised collections at factory gates[2], from shop stewards' committees[3], from cinema managers and cinema audiences[4] and on a local solidarity demonstration it organised[5]. A collection was also taken at a 'Sacred Concert'[6] and at a local United Free church[7]. This stronger role as a co-ordinator of solidarity played by the Govan Trades Council was to mean that the Govan shipyard felt less of a vacuum of leadership than workers elsewhere in Glasgow during the First World War and partly explains their low profile in the Clyde Workers Committee.

By 1914, therefore, the Glasgow Labour movement was both better organised and more clearly led by one organisation, the ILP and Forward, than was its counterpart in Liverpool. While for Glasgow Liberalism, the answer to the ILP was not New Liberalism but a new campaign for Scottish Land Reform. In February 1914 Lloyd George spoke in Glasgow for Scottish Land Reform and the Taxation of Land Values. He informed his 5,000 strong audience:

1. Forward, October 25 1913, reports the receipt from Govan Trades Council cards from workers in: P.W. McLellans, Shieldhall Co-op Workers, Stephens', Linthouse, Fairfield Engine Shop, Fairfield Shipyard., Maclie & Thomson's, Harland & Wolff, Dunsmuir & Jackson, Rowan's boiler shop.
2. Reported in ibid, October 25, November 8, 22, 29 1913.
3. Ibid, November 22 1913. The rivetters' committee in Stephen's Linthouse, organised regular collections.
4. The managers of Govan Cinema and Govan Picturedrome both donated 10 shillings: collections were held outside the Govan Picturehouse, Gaiety Picture Palace, Govan Cross Picture Palace (twice); outside Ibrox Park and in Fairfield Working Men's Club.
5. Ibid, October 18 1913.
6. Ibid, November 22 1913.
7. St. Mary's United Free Church, Govan Cross. See Ibid, November 15 1913.

> "I can see the day of the resurrection, the dawn of resurrection of the oppressed in all lands already gilding the hilltop". [1]

Instead of the 'dawn of resurrection of the oppressed' the Liberal Government in August 1914 declared war.

In Glasgow there was no tradition of either riot or 'insurrectionary' socialism. The unskilled workers of Glasgow were not organised by right wing trade union leaders like Sexton or by syndicalists, but by ILP members. George Kerr was the lecturer and organiser of the Workers Union which rose from 5 branches with 250 members in 1911 to 40 branches with 9,000 members for the whole of Scotland(but the majority of which were in Glasgow) in 1914.[2] Thus in the First World War and in the Post-war crisis the experience of the unskilled workers of Glasgow did not enter the revolutionary movement in Glasgow, but eventually entered the ILP. The revolutionary movement was concerned with the engineering and shipbuilding trades apart from John Maclean who was also concerned with the Miners. The revolutionary socialists of Glasgow entered the war, with a practice that was at variance with their theory and alongside an organisation, the ILP, whose practice was better than their theory. It is wrong to view the ILP as merely the 'parliamentary' or 'municipal' socialists of Glasgow.

1. Glagow Herald February 5 1914. The dawn of the new age was interrupted during the meeting by the ejection of four men who were calling for votes for women and protesting against the torture of women. Before the meeting began others with forged tickets were also ejected (whether these were socialist or suffragettes or Unionists one doesn't know).

2. R.Hyman , op cit p.88.

Chapter 8: The First World War and the Labour Movement in Glasgow and Liverpool

Between 1914 and 1918 the beliefs and organisations formed by a pre-war social structure and commonsense were challenged by the experience of war and revolution.

In both cities the campaign on conscription appears to have been crucial. In Glasgow it consolidated the socialist forces and headed off a potential split within the Labour alliance. In Liverpool it united a 'left' opposition to the dominant right wing trade union leadership ultimately at the cost of a split in the trade union movement and the formation of two Trades Councils.

Before 1916 the ILP, BSP and SLP in Glasgow had been divided on how to take up the anti-war issue, with Maclean on the far left attracting support within all three organisations for his position of supporting industrial action against the war. In Liverpool, by contrast, the most advanced anti-war elements were only able to take up the neutralist campaigns on food prices and profiteering being waged by the right wing in Glasgow. After 1916 the whole Glasgow ILP was revitalised by the anti-conscription campaign and peace drive of 1917/18 while in Liverpool the attempt to take up peace initiatives precipitated Sexton's split and the isolation of the left.

Both cities experienced direct action during the war. But whereas in Glasgow it gave rise to a more or less continuous form of rank and file organisation among engineering

and shipyard workers, in Liverpool it degenerated into an anti-German riot.

By 1918 the experience of the war, of the Irish rising and of the Russian Revolution had effectively settled nothing. In Glasgow the ILP and SLP interpreted all three according to their own previous positions, while the BSP was disunited. In Liverpool, while on the one hand sectarianism had been pushed back through the boom on the docks, on the other hand the Labour movement was even more divided than before the war.

A. GLASGOW

In Glasgow, the onset of war in August 1914 led to the collapse of radical Liberalism. The Young Scots Society, formed to promote Gladstonian Liberalism and which succeeded in 1912-13 in uniting all the Liberal organisations in a Scottish Home Rule Council[1], just disappeared in the face of the national crisis: "No regular meetings of the Young Scots Branches were held during the war"[2].

The Peace Society joined the ILP and BSP on an initial peace demonstration[3], and it then also disappeared.

Glasgow Liberals who wished to preserve their principles were forced to turn to the Labour movement[4], and it was the ILP which inherited their radical mantle.

The initial response of the Glasgow left groups to the war was classical Liberal opposition. They condemned it as the result of secret diplomacy and demanded peace. John Maclean, on holiday in

1. Post-war leaflet, nd, Young Scots Society , in Muirhead Collection.
2. Ibid.
3. See below, p. 449.
4. Forward, November-December 1914, passim, reported and advertised the formation of the 'No-Conscription Fellowship' and 'Union of Democratic Control'. Ibid, October 17 1914, reported the Reverend James Barr's sermon for peace in the Gorbals ("I still clasp hands with them (German Christians)") and carried his article against atrocity stories, see ibid, November 21 1914. In the West of Scotland the Co-Operative Movement was still Liberal in 1914, and in December an attempt to grant money to "innocent enemy aliens" who were co-operators stranded in Britain was lost by only 270 votes to 153, a sizeable minority taking a stand against war hysteria, see ibid, January 1915.

Tarbert, chalked the streets with the slogan "Grey is a liar"[1]. The first major article in Forward [2] was by Ramsay MacDonald, subtitled "What Sir Edward Grey withheld from the House of Commons", and arguing, "It is a diplomatists' war made up by about half-a-dozen men."

Some members of all the Glasgow socialist groups went pro-war,[3] however, as they did nationally[4], with the key divide being between those for peace and negotiations and those for war and national defence. The first peace demonstration on Glasgow Green immediately followed a pro-war meeting:

> "...from each Platform the war was denounced in the most bitter terms to the evident approval of three audiences, as there was not a murmur of dissent from beginning to end. This, too, despite the fact that a meeting in favour of the war had just finished when the Peace meeting started. In the crowds were many men in uniform, while not a few hundred yards off a detachment of Territorials could be heard distinctly playing martial airs as the various speakers exposed the hollowness of militarism. Here and there amongst the audience could be seen policemen taking notes. The nearness of the PANOPOLY OF WAR add to, rather than detracted from, the success of the meeting. It was Peace triumphant at the cannon's mouth."[5]

1. H. McShane and J. Smith, op cit, p.66.
2. August 15 1914. Called "Why we are at war", MacDonald identifies the mistake as being the creation of an "entente" - less than an alliance but more than nothing.
3. John Armour, a BSP trade union official who was formerly the Forward's "vanner", was one; while in the SLP John Muir resigned as editor of the Socialist because he opposed its anti-war line. Within the ILP, Shinwell and Charlton ducked the anti-war line from the start of the war.
4. Forward, August 21 1915, carried an article by Tom Johnston commenting on the "curious phenomenon" of "Robert Blatchford and the British Weekly, Ben Tillett and the Archbishop of Canterbury (to say nothing of Lord Davenport), strange bed-fellows everywhere, BSP officials securing military assistance to crack BSP crowns, and ILP 'trimmers' hunted about the country as a species of revolutionary too dangerous for the respectable company of Mrs Pankhurst, Sir Edward Carson and Mr. Tom Mann."
5. Forward, August 15 1914. This was only possible in a Liberal city, in the same way that no-popery lecturers could share Glasgow Green with Irish Home Rulers before the First World War.

The ILP, BSP and Peace Society each had a platform at this meeting, attended by 5,000 people despite having only been advertised in Forward[1]. The speeches at the three platforms illustrated the old Liberalism of the Peace Society[2], the radical socialism of the ILP[3] and the nascent revolutionary socialism of sections of the BSP and ILP[4]. The resolution passed declared the war the resort of "Capitalism allied with Militarism", demanded that the Government "use every endeavour to restore Peace, and suggest the promotion of a general Armistice", and demanded "the Government shall take immediate steps to organise and control the distribution of the food supply." Two of the 17 Labour councillors, John Wheatley and John S. Taylor[5], had already opposed the war on the Council.[6]

With the news that the European socialist parties had leapt to the defence of "their countries", the debate shifted from one about "Peace", in which the whole ILP was in general agreement, to one about opposition to the war. Three positions emerged within the ILP and there was some support for a fourth position, that of John Maclean. There were those like 'Rob Roy' who were against the war, but since it was happening

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid: On the Peace Society platform, Liberal and ILP councillors argued for pacificism. A Liberal councillor (Shanks) argued that war was "inhuman and irrational".
3. Ibid: All four ILP platform speakers "condemned the war as being the outcome of capitalism, militarism and secret diplomacy."
4. Ibid: On the BSP platform MacDougall (BSP) and Bell (SLP) argued it was a capitalist war; Stewart (ILP) argued for peace; and P.J. Dollan (ILP) called for Workers' Committees in every area to look after the food supply and deal with distress.
5. Councillor for Fairfield Ward, Govan, from 1911.
6. H. McShane and J. Smith op.cit, p.64.

believed it should be seen through[1]; those like Tom Johnston who opposed the war and wanted both sides to lay down their arms and have a negotiated peace[2]; and those like Willie Stewart and Willie Reagan (of the Catholic Socialist Society) who later supported a unilateral British declaration of peace.[3] Finally, there was Maclean's call for "class war" and "class patriotism"[4].

These positions developed within a few weeks from the outbreak of war and derived from the same Liberal commonsense that believed war was futile and from the confusions caused to a Labour world vision in which the 'political' evolutionary socialists had always looked to Germany for leadership[5]. Yet while all four positions overlapped within the Glasgow ILP, it is clear that the first 'anti-war' stance conceded to British nationalism in a way the other three did not. Thus 'Rob Roy' soon developed the analogy of "Our tribe"[6] which was far from being part of the Liberal-Labour working man's commonsense. His argument that socialists must instinctively defend "our tribe" was, however, immediately denounced by Tom Johnston and others[7].

1. Forward, September 19 1914: "Socialism, you see, has not arrived and there is no sense in acting and talking as if it had."
2. Ibid: November-December 1914, passim.
3. See below, p. 501.
4. Forward, September 26 1914: Maclean replied to Belfort Bax's Justice article calling on people to "hate...the present Prussian military and bureaucratic state system". Maclean argued: "Our first business is to hate the British capitalist system".
5. H. McShane & J. Smith, op cit, p. 47-48.
6. Forward, November 28 1914, April 17 1915.
7. Ibid.

At this point the concept of self-sacrifice in the national defence, a central assumption of Modern Conservatism, was rejected by the left of the ILP (as well as by Liberal commonsense).

Willie Stewart, the Scottish ILP organiser, also took up the debate with 'Rob Roy', but went further and called for an anti-war campaign to be taken up by the ILP[1]. After September 1914, the arguments became much more concrete because of the recruitment issue. In October, Stewart argued, "I am in favour of recruiting ... to the army of socialism"[2] and Shettleston ILP condemned all Labour recruiters[3].

Most of the enthusiastic recruiters from the Labour movement in Glasgow came from the ranks of full-time officials from the unskilled workers' unions. Thus James O'Connor Kessack from the dockers and A.R. Turner of the Tramwaymen appeared on recruiting platforms in uniforms[4]. These unions were less influenced by the Liberalism of the craft union tradition as O'Connor Kessack's recruiting jingoism illustrated:

1. Forward, September 12 1914. Stewart wrote: "I am glad to belong to the ILP. It seems to be the only organised body left to ensure some kind of public discussion of British foreign policy ... the Fabians have joined the War-Lords. The BSP through its official organ, gives its members no guidance, though the rank and file are anti-militarist to a man. The Labour Party have turned 28, Victoria Street into a War Office 'Annexe', even the Peace Society has fallen dumb. The Clarion, we have known for years where it would be at such a crisis, while the Daily Citizen has become a feeble echo of the Daily Mail. So there is only the ILP left".

2. Ibid, October 3 1914.

3. Ibid, November 28 1914. John S. Taylor spoke for the resolution. A letter signed "Shettleston" said the resolution shouldn't have been put because it would split the Labour movement. A struggle had already taken place in Govan. Govan Central ILP had passed a resolution supporting Wheatley and Taylor for their opposition to the war on the Town Council against the wishes of Dollan, Shinwell and Charlton. See ibid, September 19, 26 1914.

4. Ibid, July 1915. When the Parliamentary committee of the STUC met to discuss the war, "for a short time Sergeant O'Connor Kessack acted as Chairman, while another member of the Parliamentary Committee, Councillor A.R. Turner, also appeared on the platform in Khaki".

> "He had spoken at street corners and in market places and instead of telling people to work, work, work, he used to tell them to stop, stop, stop (laughter). Now he said to hell with stoppage (Cheers) ... Before it was too late he appealed to all eligible men to join the ranks of these brave and happy fellows, and thus learn to defend the glorious country which gave them birth" 1.

In January 1915, however, Stewart broke off the debate with 'Rob Roy' because "tempers are fractured":

> "On this matter 'Rob Roy' and I will never agree. Our differences are fundamental. I had thought that both being Socialist, we might find some common ground of principle from which to reason with each other. But it is not so. Our conceptions of Socialism are different; our interpretations of history are different; and, I think, our ideals are dissimilar. So we must each 'gang his ain gait' with as much mutual respect as possible. Similarly with my Labour friends" 2.

Stewart put forward his own conscription plan - of everybody with over £1,000 a year:

> "I think they should be given the place of honour in the forefront of the battle-line, in the muddiest and bloodiest trenches, where the shrapnel is flying thickest. I would not deny them any slightest particle of share in the glories of war. I am prepared to see the war through with these people as the fighting men. I think that is fair. It is for them that the war is being waged. It is not being waged for me or my class" 3.

Stewart's position was also strongly internationalist:

1. Forward, October 23 1914. Lieutenant O'Connor Kessack died at the Battle of the Somme.
2. Ibid, January 2 1915. Glasier wrote in the same issue: "'Rob Roy' ... is usually such a sane thinker and instructive writer and always such an excellent comrade and friend that I in common with all ILP readers of Forward, extend a plenary indulgence to him in brandishing his Clan Donachie blade about the head of the German Kaiser". Unlike the situation inside the BSP, the 'agreement to disagree' inside the ILP meant there would be no split on the war issue.
3. Ibid.

> "Though there were not a dozen Socialists in all the world to make the stand, yet they must do it ... Leibknecht ... Russian Socialists ... the Italian Socialists ... The British Independent Labour Party ... If the Labour Party choose to remain out, then we must go on without them. That is all" 1.

Alongside Stewart's article, however, Forward printed a letter from Keir Hardie[2] arguing that he, like the ILP Executive, was completely neutral on war recruiting, and in February 1915 Hardie presided at an 'International Socialist Conference' attended only by representatives of the allied nations[3]. The same edition reprinted an article by MacDonald[4] clearly stating his position was "See the war through".

These statements undermined Stewart's stance and ensured that an anti-war campaign would not come from the Glasgow ILP. The SLP, although it attacked the war as a capitalist war, did not conduct these kinds of political agitations[5], it meant that the anti-war campaign in Glasgow depended upon John Maclean. Maclean was hampered because the national BSP was pro-war.

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid. For months 'Rob Roy' and Stewart had debated the issue whether Hardie and MacDonald supported the war effort. 'Rob Roy' argued they believed the war must be seen through; Stewart, Ibid, December 19 1914, wrote that 'Rob Roy' could only find two quotations.
3. Forward, February 27 1915. The Conference resolution was no comfort to anti-war ILP hopes. Having argued the war was due to imperialism it said that socialists were at war with the Governments which invaded Belgium and France, although, "The Socialists none the less are resolved to resist any attempt to turn this defensive war into a war of conquest".
4. Ibid, January 2 1915. Originally it appeared in the Leicester Pioneer.
5. This was why Tom Bell of the SLP spoke on the BSP platform at the August 1914 peace demonstration.

The debate within the Glasgow ILP was not a simple 'pacifism' opposed to the 'revolutionary' position of the BSP or SLP[1]. Johnston's attitude at this point was not markedly different from the German socialists' Anti-War Manifesto[2]. While the attitudes of Stewart and Reagan was as close to Maclean on the war issue as most members of the BSP were in 1914 and 1915. Thus James Houston, an ILP member, was arrested and fined under the Defence of the Realm Act (DORA) in October 1915[3] as was Willie Stewart a year later[4]. Willie Reagan's page of "Catholic Socialist Notes" in Forward were a bitter, though humourous, commentary on the war:

> "We notice with regret that the Catholic clergy, whilst pointing the road to Flanders, still refuse to lead the way. It is doubtful whether the workers fully appreciate the sacrifice which Father Vaughan and his spirited colleagues are making in remaining at home at a time when, according to the fighting Bernard, death in defence of Britain carries with it immediate entry to Paradise. They are really roughing it by staying here" 5.

1. This had been the general characterisation of the debate by historians as diverse as Hinton, The First Shop Steward's Movement, Allen & Unwin, 1973, p.120-123, Challinor, op cit, p.124, W. Kendall, The Revolutionary Movement in Britain, 1900-21, London 1969, p.111, Middlemas, op.cit, p.70-71.

2. Published by Forward, May 8 1915, under the sub-heading: "The slaughter of the People must cease! A stirring call for a United Peace Movement".. It was only after December 1915 that Johnston retreats from this position.

3. Forward, October 30, November 6 1915. James Houston, a school teacher like Maclean, lost his job as a result of the arrest. Maclean always raised Houston (and Maxton's) reinstatement as well as his own after he was dismissed. Houston was charged for "statements, likely to prejudice recruiting, contrary to Section 27 of the Defence of the Realm (Consolidation) Regulation 1914". During the case the Sheriff stopped general evidence against the ILP being brought in to prove that Houston had argued "that the present war was desired and caused by capitalists who would derive pecuniary benefit therefrom".

4. Ibid, October 14 1916. Stewart was charged under DORA, convicted and fined £10 which he paid.

5. Forward, August 21 1915. It has been assumed that these notes were written by Wheatley; I believe it more likely they were written by Willie Reagan during the period he was in Glasgow.

And individual ILP members, like Helen Crawfurd the suffragette, used to speak at Maclean's anti-war Bath Street meetings.[1]

The ILP's anti-war stance did not greatly affect support for Labour: in the partial municipal election of November 1914 it secured one more Labour councillor than the previous year,[2] and the 1915 May Day demonstration was the largest there had been.[3] The 'agree to differ' attitude was thus widespread. It resulted, however, in the ILP looking both ways: while its public face was anti-war, many prominent pro-war or "neutral" trade union officials were ILP members. Thus the Glasgow Trades Council, although led by two ILP members, Robert Charlton, President, and ILP councillor, and Emmanual Shinwell, Vice-Chairman and seamen's union official, presented no anti-war face at all. Indeed, Shinwell and Charlton were instrumental in blocking Trades Council support for the August 1914 peace demonstration.[4]

The continuing divisions among Glasgow Trades Council delegates[5] can be partly explained by the same contradiction Price points to

1. N. Milton, op cit, p.82 quoting James MacDougall.
2. Glasgow Herald, November 3/4 1914, reported that Labour fought several seats in spite of the electoral truce, winning in Anderston and Plantation, and losing in Govanhill.
3. Glasgow Herald, May 3 1915. 165 organisations took part.
4. The ILP wrote to the Trades Council asking its support for the demonstration "to express its regret at the outbreak of war". Shinwell moved against sending speakers, lost the first vote by 57 to 53, and then called a recount which he won. See Glasgow Trades Council, Minutes, August 5 1914.
5. Glasgow Trades Council, Minutes, October 28 1914, reported that at a public protest meeting against distress caused by the war, George Carson had stopped the Socialist Glee Choir from singing the "Labourers' battle hymn" and had at first stopped John Maclean from speaking and then only allowed him two minutes. A Committee was set up to report on his actions. Ibid, September 8 1915, reported the narrow defeat, by 41 to 40, of a resolution expressing sympathy with MacDonald after attacks on him in the press.

concerning the Boer War:[1] a working class opposition to the war while the army was made up of workers.[2] While it was therefore more difficult to involve the Glasgow Trades Council in the wartime political movement, it was the leadership of Shinwell and Charlton that was decisive.[3] They supported the Labour Party's strategy, and Charlton, Shinwell and Turner organised a Trades Council Committee for the Relief of Distress.[4] Charlton also used the Trades Council to complain of visitors' attitudes to the Soldiers' and Sailors' Association and the Charity Organisation Society[5] and reported on the work of the Prince of Wales Relief Fund.[6]

1. Price, op cit, p.80-87.
2. Maclean's first sedition charge was focused deliberately on whether he had called individual soldiers "murderers".
3. The SLP had largely ignored the Trades Council. The Socialist December 1908, described it as "that heterogenous mass of effete craft antiquities". The BSP was strongest in the South Side, the area of Glasgow covered by the Govan Trades Council. Both organisations had therefore left the Glasgow Trades Council under the leadership of the more opportunistic ILPers.
4. Glasgow Trades Council, Minutes, September 2 1914.
5. Ibid, September 16 1914.
6. Ibid, December 16 1914.

The BSP and the SLP

The war transformed John Maclean from the most notable educationalist and propagandist in the West of Scotland to a national leader.[1] Maclean's tragedy was that he was a leader with a following, but without an organisation.

In September 1914 the BSP Executive recommended their members take part in recruiting.[2] Against them Maclean posed "class patriotism"[3] and organised Sunday evening propaganda meetings opposite the central Glasgow recruiting offices in Bath Street. Even some ILP members spoke there and Maclean became suspicious of those socialists who, like Gallacher, didn't oppose the war at this key Glasgow focal point.[4] The meetings became very large and even pro-war agitators couldn't stop them.[5]

In 1915 the BSP Conference was evenly divided on the war and Maclean was forced to attack Hyndman in Forward when Justice refused to print any articles which might bother the censor.[6] Maclean was arrested first in Shawlands, and although he was never prosecuted a Free Speech Committee organised a demonstration with MacDougall, BSP organiser,[7] McManus and Milligan, SLP, and Harry Hopkins, ILP[8] on the

1. N. Milton, op cit, p.79-88, 97-102; W. Kendall, op cit, p.108-110 J. McShane & J. Smith, op cit, p.66-67. Hinton, op cit, p.124,132 was wrong when he argues that Maclean was principally a propagandist and not a leader. Maclean's problem was he never succeeded in constructing an organisation.
2. Justice, September 17 1914.
3. Ibid.
4. H. McShane & J. Smith, op cit, p.77.
5. N. Milton, op cit, p.82-84, 98-99.
6. Ibid, p.87-88.
7. MacDougall organised daytime workgate anti-war BSP meetings while Maclean spoke in the evenings and at weekends.
8. N. Milton, op cit, p.98.

platform. After his second arrest, however, Maclean was charged under DORA for the statement, "I have been enlisted in the Socialist Army for 15 years. God damn all other armies!"[1] and fined £5 or five days' imprisonment. Maclean had previously argued that the Clyde shipwrights should refuse to pay their fines,[2] and so went to prison. Another Free Speech Committee was formed, this time including the Glasgow Trades Council[3] as well as the Govan Trades Council, the ASE District Committee, the Scottish Prohibition Party (Glasgow branch), the ILP, SLP and BSP and unattached socialists. The Union of Democratic Control refused to join.[4]

The SLP took a consistent anti-war stand throughout,[5] despite Muir's initial equivocation. Arthur MacManus thus described the war as "a war between empires" at the 1915 May Day meeting in Glasgow Green. But the SLP's anti-war stand was limited to propaganda, and the absence of basic arguments in the Socialist suggests

1. Forward, November 20 1915.
2. See below, p.464.
3. Shinwell and Charlton were prepared to see the Trades Council's voice be heard on Free Speech. Thus in November 1915 the Trades Council protested against the Corporation's ban on the Free Speech Committee using the City Hall, and on their own Anti-Conscription meeting (see below, p.483), Glasgow Trades Council, Minutes, November 23 1915, and ibid, December 8 1915, they sent a deputation to the Govan School Board demanding the reinstatement of Maclean and protested to the Secretary of State for Scotland against the prosecution of both Maclean and Houston: ibid, January 12 1916, they endorsed a Free Speech Committee letter demanding the release of Peter Petroff; and ibid, January 26 1916, they endorsed a further letter to the Labour Party Conference asking it to take a firm stand on free speech.
4. Forward, October 23 1915.
5. Every month the Socialist's front page carried an anti-war cartoon.

they assumed they were speaking to the already converted. Moreover, with a policy only of Industrial Unionism their organisation was on the decline. In June 1915 the Socialist appealed to members to attend branch meetings. When William Holliday was arrested in Birmingham under DORA and sentenced to three month's hard labour, they wrote regretting they couldn't hold their own protest meeting, but felt it wisest to involve the Trades Council, the BSP and the ILP.[1] In fact, the ILP did not attend the 2,000 strong meeting, although the Glasgow Trades Council sent speakers and the Socialist recorded special thanks to Maclean and MacDougall of the BSP for their work.[2]

Despite the SLP's commitment to propaganda against the war it was Maclean and ILP members who were arrested for sedition in Glasgow, not SLPers. Those SLP members who were transformed by the war experience were involved in another form of activity, the work-shop agitation and the Clyde Workers' Committee. This one-sided involvement in the war-time struggles meant that the theory that came to dominate the Clyde Workers Committee remained a combination of economism and Industrial Unionism.

1. Socialist, July 1915.
2. Ibid. Between 70 and 100 identifiable Glasgow individuals donated immediately to the Holliday Defence Fund Subscription List that appeared in the Socialist; and the list suggested the SLP's strength in Glasgow was to the North rather than South of the Clyde. Challinor, op cit, p.138, reports that donations came in from many sources, including Scottish BSP branches.

The Clyde Workers Committee

Historians of the Clydeside during the First World War have tended to ignore the wider political context of the city and set up false polarities of distinct agitations and separated organisations: differences between engineering workers in the munitions factories and shipyard workers;[1] differences between the 'revolutionary syndicalist' leadership of the struggles and the 'craft conservative' rank and file;[2] the existence of a real gulf between the BSP and ILP;[3] the separate leadership of the rent strike and the Munitions Act agitation.[4]

However, the early autobiographies of the period suggest one event flowing into another, and although there are differences in emphasis, the impression was of one developing movement.[5] Not only did all the leaders know each other and membership of particular groups was often highly accidental,[6] but the common evolutionary socialist assumptions of the ILP, BSP and SLP made it possible for them to work together.[7]

1. Hinton, op cit, p.112-113, p.118-119.
2. Iain Maclean, Popular Protest and Public Order. Red Clydeside, 1915-1919, in ed. R.Quinault and J.Stevenson. "Popular Protest and Public Order" (1974
3. Both Hinton and Maclean.
4. J. Melling, Glasgow Rent Strike and Clydeside Labour, University of Glasgow paper.
5. This is true of biographies like T. Bell, "Pioneering Days" and W. Gallacher, Revolt on the Clyde. See also H. McShane & J. Smith, op cit, p.61-99.
6. Forward, March 27 1909, wrote of John F. Armour, an SDF member who was appointed Forward "vanner" for the summer: "He specialises in calm reason - as an organiser he is a genius: he can soothe drunks with his presence, and can convert even Orangemen to Socialism. It is Socialism he is out to preach. Converts will be asked to join the local organisation of whatever Party is in existence in the district...".
7. The sharp distinction between revolutionaries and reformists of the 1920s should not be read back into the period before 1920.

Moreover, the ILP had the largest membership in engineering,[1] and although the leadership of the Clyde Workers Committee (CWC) included only two ILP members (the rest were SLP except for one BSP member[2]) among those who attended the weekly CWC meetings, the ILP probably had greater numbers than either the SLP or certainly, the BSP.[3] They all dressed in blue suits, bowler hats and carried umbrellas,[4] like Gallacher, but this second layer of leadership below the CWC's leading committee was not simply 'craft conservative' without any socialist or liberal ideas. Forward's circulation before the First World War was over 10,000, largely in the Clyde basin.[5] Even among Freemasons and certainly among the Rechabites a Liberal commonsense existed in Glasgow to which the CWC could appeal. Thus skilled workers opposed compulsion for ideological as well as economic and craft reasons: the Liberal slogan "the classes versus the masses" gave rise to contradictory 'craft conservatism'. Its double-sided and interconnected nature became clear as the range of struggles developed in 1915-1916.

The 1915 'Tuppence or nothing' engineers' strike was generalised by the unofficial stoppage at Weirs because American workers had been imported at higher rates of pay.[6] Yet Weirs was not a 'craft consera-tive' factory: it was second only to Singers in Glasgow as a highly

1. The Kingston ILP branch McShane joined was almost entirely skilled engineers; during his working life as an engineer before and during the First World War the socialists he met in the workshops and in his ASE branch were ILP members, see H. McShane & J. Smith, op cit, p.25-26, 43, 59-60.
2. W. Gallacher, op cit, p.58.
3. T. Bell, op cit, p.160-162,p.174, recalled the SLP members were more likely to be iron moulders.
4. H. McShane & J. Smith, op cit, p.74.
5. Middlemas, op cit, p.47, reports that Johnston's Our Noble Families sold 100,000 copies before the First World War.
6. Hinton, op cit, p.103-109.

Taylorised factory with a developed shop stewards' workshop committee,[1] a history of unofficial stoppages,[2] and Workers' Union organisation of the semi-skilled,[3] Nonetheless, the generalisation of the strike led to the formation of the Clyde Labour Withholding Committee, the origin of the CWC.[4]

The struggle during the first wave of prosecutions under the Munitions Act in 1915 also reflected more than a simple 'economic' response. The shipyard employers were applying the Act more aggressively[5] than the engineering employers,[6] but despite some form of unofficial co-ordination between the different shipyards in Partick and Govan, the shipyard workers sought help from beyond their immediate ranks.

1. H. McShane & J. Smith, op cit, p.59-60. Justice, July 23 1914, attacked "speed up" at Weirs.
2. Justice, August 31 1912, for apprentices' revolt against the Insurance Acts, demanding the employers pay their contributions.
3. Ibid, May 24 1913.
4. Hinton, op cit, p.108-109, argues that the least militant areas separated from the most militant during the last days of the strike with Govan and Finnieston returning to work before Dalmuir, Scotstoun and Parkhead. He suggests it was from these "same militant areas" that the CWC emerged in October 1915. In fact, Partick and Govan had more in common than Partick and Parkhead. The difference was that the Govan Trades Council fulfilled the CWC's role in that area.
5. Fairfields sacked two men for poor work and the union meeting that demanded the notices be withdrawn ran over the lunch hour a few minutes. This 'strike' was the pretext for charging 17 men under the Munitions Act, and they were fined £10 each. See Forward, September 11 1915, which, careful not to bring the authorities down on it, quoted the Glasgow Herald against the Act: "The Act was not passed in order that it might be flourished by foremen and others endowed with delegated power as if it were an Egyptian whip for the back of Israelite brick workers." The shipbuilding employers were anxious to restore the old Leaving Certificates they had been forced to give up three years earlier and saw the Munitions Act as their opportunity to restore their authority.
6. When Marshall, a Parkhead Forge shop steward, was jailed in June 1915, he was rapidly released after negotiations with ASE officials. See Hinton, op cit, p.113.

The Govan Trades Council was the 'natural' body to turn to. Given the industrial and occupational structure of Govan and Partick, the Govan Trades Council was essentially a skilled shipyard workers' delegate body. Moreover, its Secretary, unlike the Glasgow Trades Council, was a skilled engineer - Harry Hopkins.[1] Hopkins, an ILP member, was organiser of the annual Glasgow May Day demonstrations and thus knew every socialist group and trade union branch which went on it. The Govan Trades Council supported the Fairfield shipwrights' intention to refuse to pay their £10 fines[2] and Hopkins circularised the whole Glasgow Labour movement, wrote a protest to Lloyd George, and collected for the dependants.[3]

1. Forward, September 5 1915, carried this biography of Hopkins who was standing for Number 5 Divisional Organiser of the ASE: "He has been a member of the ASE for over twenty years; for 19 years a member of the ILP; one of the founders of the Govan and Kinning Park SS Schools - was Treasurer and Superintendent in later years; helped to form Govan LRC; and was Vice Chairman, Chairman and is now the Secretary of Govan Trades Council; has experience on Old Age Pensions Committee, Insurance Committee, Juvenile Advisory Committee, May-Day Organiser and strike assister, including all local strikes and Wishaw mill girls, Kilbirnie net workers, Irish transport workers and Dublin strikes." Hopkins was also a member of the Govan School Board where he argued against Maclean's dismissal. In 1917 he finally won the ASE Organiser job but was dismissed in 1919 because of his part in the 1919 '40 hours' strike. In 1926 he spoke on a National Minority Movement platform. He was the 'good sense' thinker and organiser of the South-side of Glasgow.

2. Three finally refused "the private advance of their fines" and went to prison for 30 days. ILP Councillor Pat Dollan wrote: "I know the three imprisoned men personally, and better men never walked in shoe leather. All three believe in our principles." Forward, October 16 1915.

3. Ibid.

As a result of this attack the Clyde Labour Withholding Committee was resurrected. On September 12 1915 a meeting attended by 300 shop stewards from the allied trades was called by the Glasgow District Committee of the ASE. It then called a wider rank and file meeting. These meetings were clearly opposed to the Munitions Act[1] and struck a powerful chord in the area. When a shop steward at Weirs was charged with "molesting" a workman by asking to see his union card, 300 workers accompanied him to Court threatening "drastic action" from the factory if he were fined or jailed.[2]

The theory of individual self-sacrifice for the sake of the nation is a component of Modern Conservatism, not of 19th Century Liberalism. The Glasgow skilled men could be pro-war in general but against industrial and military conscription; those who supported the war could object to the reimposition of the Leaving Certificate. The Clydeside Labour movement was thus opposed to the working of the Munitions Act. Yet the question its anti-war elements were asking was how to generalise this opposition into total resistance to the Act and to the war?

Nationally, the trade union officials (with the exception of the miners) had accepted the Treasury Agreement that was codified into the Munitions Act and endorsed by the Labour Party.[3] The attitude

1. Ibid, September 18, 25 1915; Hinton, op cit, p.115.
2. Forward's editor, Johnston, did report "free speech" struggles and industrial action against the Munitions Acts at this time. He later claimed he didn't.
3. K. Burgess, The Challenge of Labour, 1980, p.160-164; S. & B. Webb, History of Trade Unionism, 1666-1920, 1920, p.639 point out: "The Munitions of War Acts, 1915, 1916 and 1917, by which all this industrial coercion was statutorily imposed, were accepted by overwhelming majorities at successive Trade Union and Labour Party Conferences."

of the leaders of the ILP Glasgow Federation and Glasgow Trades Council was to seek amendments to the Act,[1] whose entire purpose was to control and dilute labour in order to increase the supply of munitions.[2] In July 1915 the South Wales miners took official strike action despite being "proclaimed" under the Act,[3] but when the Labour Witholding Committee was reformed as the CWC in October 1915 it was to lead a united opposition only against the workings of the Munitions Act. Gallacher wrote:

> "It was the trouble, the very serious trouble, that followed the passing of the Munitions Act, that brought the Committee into existence. The Act had not started on its enslaving career when it became obvious that some form of organisation would have to be brought into existence to unite the workers in defending themselves against it.

1. Forward, December 25th 1915; Glasgow Trades Council, Minutes, August 25th 1915; reports the Trades Council ordering 200 of the Labour Party's pamphlets on the Munitions Act; and ibid, November 17th 1915, it discussed amendments to the Act to set up Local Joint Committees rather than Tribunals, and to establish a schedule of departures from trade union and workshop practices since the outbreak of the war in order that they be restored at the end of the war.

2. Forward, December 11th 1915, pointed out that women were being paid 15 shillings a week for 51-56 hours work on shells and fuses, whereas semi-skilled men received 33s 9d for 54 hours; but the employers also wished to take on women to raise productivity. Scott and Cunnison, Industries in the Clyde Valley during the War, (1924), p.100, estimated: "If women had produced shells as shells in small quantities were produced with skilled labour in 1913, the output would have been only one third of the quantity actually obtained."

3. W. Hannington, Industrial History in Wartime, (1940) p.52-53.

"Two or three members of the old Labour Withholding Committee who had kept in touch with one another since the strike in February last, decided to call a meeting of all shop stewards or delegates interested with a view to forming an organisation and formulating a policy.
"At the meeting, which was a large and representative one, there was scarcely a delegate present but had a more or less serious grievance to report as a result of the operation of the Munition Act....
"Our policy was simply and purely defensive."[1]

The broader aim of the CWC was not the overthrow of the Munitions Act, but the old SLP aim of an alternative trade union structure:

> "Is it sensible to allow ourselves to be split up into sections..
> "One organisation for the workers of an industry means strength, and strength means victory. The present multiplicity of Unions spells weakness, and the ultimate aim of the Clyde Workers Committee is to weld these unions into one powerful organisation that will place the workers in complete control of the industry.. Let every worker play his part and the goal will soon be attained."[2]

The CWC chose to fight on dilution and control within the workshop rather than against the Munitions Acts and the State. This SLP emphasis on the class struggle within the workshop, also meant the CLWC and CWC were not involved in the rents' struggles of 1915.[3] This was not inevitable. The CWC was a 'constructed' committee, wider than individual workshops or one particular industry, formed by men with definite beliefs which influenced its activities. In this sense it

1. The Worker, January 29 1916.
2. Ibid.
3. This was also because the rent struggle's strongest base was in Govan and Partick which already had their own organisational network in the form of the Govan Trades Council and Harry Hopkins.

was unlike the workshop committees which developed under the stimulus of socialists but were essentially 'organic' to the new processes being introduced in engineering.[1] The strength of SLP beliefs within the 'constructed' CWC was thus decisive in influencing its activities and orientation, and while BSP members Maclean and MacDougall were active in the rents agitation, the CWC was not.[2]

1. Weirs (line production) and Parkhead Forge (multi-site production) both had workshop committees before 1914; other engineering factories did not and their committees were built as a response to dilution; see Herbert Highton collection, Glasgow University, Questionnaire to ASE members on shop floor organisation during the war; and ibid, letter from Barr and Stroud describing the development of a shop committee around the dilution question; H. McShane & J. Smith, op cit, p.59-60, for Weirs. When the Commissioners moved against the CWC, see below, p.491 , it was only Weir's and Parkhead Forge's organisations they had to break. The shipyards faced limited new work processes and dilution, and workplace committees were not established either before or during the war. Shipyard workers remained active through their branches, the Trades Councils and in certain yards in sectional committees, such as the Rivetters' Committee at Stephens, Linthouse.

2. Hinton, op cit, p.127 points out the CWC "as such had nothing to do with it". But J. Melling, "Employers, Labour and the Housing Market" op cit p.17 argues: "Rather than being distinct from the Shop Stewards' movement and the industrial conflicts, it was an integral part of it". But in Govan there was an alternative rank and file network to the CWC that was involved with links through the ILP women's organisations into the local communities - the Govan Trades Council. It was this "industrial" movement that was involved in the rents agitation, not the CWC.

1915 Rent Strike

The 1915 Glasgow rent strike has to be set in the context of the previous agitations on housing and of other campaigns pursued by the ILP in 1914-1915. These were on price rises, rent increases and evictions. At their centre was a group of prominent ILP councillors with some other ILP members who had been active in the £8 cottages campaign.

John Wheatley's principled stands on Catholic socialism and the war gave him considerable credibility; but this was greatly enhanced by his reputation as a practical reformer. Thus his speech at the August 1914 peace demonstration was on food prices.[1] In November speaking to the Catholic Socialist Society,

> "Mr. Wheatley expressed regret that the Trade Union leaders had not demanded for the workers and their families a larger share in the land, property, and industry of the country in return for their services for defending these, rather than pleading for more general charitable concessions from the people who were to be permitted without question to hold the country and all the means of production and distributing goods, after the British workers had ensured British ownership of these with their lives and limbs."[2]

During the early months of the war the ILP, however, worked to reconcile those members who wished to avoid the issue of the war, those who were anti-war and those who wished to see it through by

1. Forward, August 15 1914.
2. Ibid, November 14 1914.

campaigning against distress.[1] Robert Charlton, President of Glasgow Trades Council, was appointed ILP councillor on the Glasgow Relief Committee, the local body of the National Relief Fund (called the Prince of Wales' Relief Fund).[2] The ILP was also involved in the local branch of the War Emergency Workers' Committee which created ten Vigilance Committees, meeting monthly to hear grievances.[3] After starting with considerable illusions in the Glasgow Relief Committee, Charlton in April 1915 signed a War Emergency Workers' Committee resolution[4] calling on Glasgow workers to stop donating to the National Relief Fund. The ILP's alternative to workshop collections to relieve distress was the introduction of a graduated income tax.

The Glasgow ILP's housing campaign did not stop in the early months of the war, but intensified. In August Forward carried two major articles by Johnston justifying the economic basis of the £8 cottages scheme.[5] And in the November 1914 municipal elections,[6] the central question was support for the municipal policies

1. This was also happening nationally. The War Emergency Workers National Committee organised a Conference on Food and Fuel Prices on March 12 1915, and speakers included Bowerman, the TUC Secretary, Marion Phillips of Women's Labour League, W.C. Anderson, Chairman of the Labour Party Executive, Clynes, Hyndman of the BSP and Smillie of the Miners' Federation; see Clarion, March 5 1915.

2. In Glasgow it had a Central Committee, two sub-committees and 23 local committees; see Forward, November 14 1914.

3. Ibid, July 10 1915.

4. It called the administration of the fund middle class, "neglectful, niggardly, patronising, expensive, incompetent, undemocratic and over-centralised". See Ibid, April 24 1915. It was a re-emergence of the Charity Organisation Society spirit despite Charlton's hopes to the contrary- see, ibid, September 12, November 14 1914.

5. Ibid, August 1, 8 1914.

6. Dollan had argued for a local electoral truce, but was immediately denounced in ibid, September 26 1914 by "Vigilant". who wrote that Labour councillors might support the truce but the ILP didn't.

of the Labour Party.[1] In Anderston, Plantation, Govanhill and Govan, Forward claimed,"women were the most enthusiastic workers"[2] and that the Kinning Park Co-Operative Society gave "rare assistance" in the three South-side wards,[2] and Labour returned 19 councillors, of whom 18 were ILP members.[3]

With many councillors committed to the £8 cottage scheme it was immediately raised again in the City Council. In December 1914,

> "The Labour Party was out in force, the gallery was filled with women spectators, and speculation was rife as to how many votes could be polled in the Council for the scheme that has aroused the interests of the electors..."[4]

The spokespeople for the largely women's deputation were Mrs. Loge, Willie Shaw of the Joiners and Glasgow Trades Council, and Harry Hopkins. James Stewart, the originator of the proposal, John Wheatley and John S. Taylor then moved that the Common Good Fund give a grant of £30,000 to build the houses, but this was eventually fobbed off.[5]

The Labour Party Housing Committee therefore launched a massive campaign for the scheme:

1. Forward, November 14 1914. The programme included municipal housing, interest free loans for house building from the Common Good Fund, municipal milk and coal supplies and a 30 shillings a week minimum wage. Several Unionist candidates supported the proposals for municipal milk as well as housing.
2. Ibid; it added "it is regrettable that the men did not follow their lead".
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid, December 26 1914.
5. Ibid. The objections were the scheme would only build 150 homes and that it was building homes for the better-off workers. A Special Committee was appointed on Cottages for the Working Classes to consider the issue, but Wheatley was not elected to it.

> "On 4th January of this year, we had the largest Housing Conference ever held in Scotland. Innumerable public meetings and hundreds of meetings with Ward Committees, Trade Union Branches and other bodies, have permeated a great mass of public opinion, above all the work which we are most proud of is our association with the Glasgow Women's Housing Association in arousing the Women of Glasgow to take an active part in changing our housing conditions. This is shown by the great attendance of ladies, who, week after week, crowd the gallery of the Municipal Chamber, watching the actions of the Town Council."[1]

In February 1915 the ILP won the municipal by-election at Kinning Park, where Scott finally beat the combined opposition of the house factors.[2] Forward described the victory as a "Knock Out to Property", and Scott put it down to "the raising of rents and the jumping of food prices".[3] Forward featured articles on both subjects and an appeal for information on "rent jumping" to be sent to George Barnes, MP, via Councillor Andrew McBride, Secretary of the Glasgow Labour Party Housing Committee, appeared on February 13 1914. It also reported on the Paisley and District Tenants Association and the Stevenson and District Trades Council's reaction to rent increases and evictions.[4]

That month the issues of price rises, better housing, rent increases and evictions began to overlap. When the City Council

1. Forward, February 27 1915. Letter from McBride.
2. This was the fifth time Scott had fought the seat. The Glasgow "house factor" was the solicitor who operated the individual blocks of tenements as manager on behalf of the actual owner. Some solicitors' firms specialised as factors and managed property extensively throughout Glasgow.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid, February 20 1915.

argued it was illegal to take money from the Common Good without paying interest,[1] the Labour Party Housing Committee responded by,

> "going steadily on with our policy of educating the people as to the necessity of Municipal Housing. Nothing has happened to change our views, that if the Labour Party if given a majority in the Council, a grant can be taken from the Common Good, free of interest... It now rests with the Electors..."[2]

Thus while the Housing Committee was not going to lead immediate action on housing, its agitation underwrote grievances about the rising level of rents and as that movement grew, it was able to assume leadership of the rents movement as well.

The war had created a great influx of munitions workers into Glasgow and had also inflated the cost of building. A city survey of ten houses per ward (37 wards) taken in October - November 1915 by the Hunter-Scott Committee of Inquiry showed an average rent increase of under 6 per cent since the beginning of the war; but in the shipbuilding wards of Govan Central and Fairfield the increases were from 14 to 23 per cent and from 11 to 15 per cent respectively.[3]

Thus when the factors, Neilson & Sons,[4] announced in May 1915 the second round of rent increases since the beginning of the war - a doubling from 12 to 24 shillings a year in all their properties,

1. Forward, February 20 1915. This was despite the fact that John Battersby and James Stewart had ascertained in June 1914 that it was not illegal.
2. Ibid, February 27 1915.
3. The Committee of Inquiry into Rent Increases 1915: Lord Hunter and Professor Scott; see also J. Melling, op cit, p.18.
4. Forward, June 5 1915. They managed property in Stephen Drive, Hutton Drive, Grace Drive and Drive Road in South Govan.

> "The Women's Housing Association (Govan District) held a protest meeting in the middle of May, in Cressy Halls. This meeting 'declared war' against the new demands. A plan of campaign was submitted, and the Govan LRC, the Housing Committee and the Women's Housing Association, with the support of the tenants, determined to fight the factors."[1] (my emphasis - J.S.)

The initial strategy was to pay the old rent but not the increase.

But when the factor refused any amount except the increased rent, it became a total rent strike. It had considerable local support.

John S. Taylor pointed out,

> "Attempted victimisation will set Govan in an uproar. Govan is a stronghold of Trade Unionism. Practically all the tenants involved are Trade Unionists; they are organised into a local committee to resist this increase, but one thing above all others, they are prepared to fight against is 'victimisation' and 'blacklegging' of any kind of the tenants."[2]

Andrew McBride drew a further lesson from the rent struggle.

"Our (Housing) Committee", he wrote, had collected all the evidence of rent increases sent in, but the Parliamentary Labour Party was not prepared to move on the question:

> "I think, after this experience, also the events of more recent times, it will be clear to the minds of most of us, that we need not depend on the Labour Party in the House of Commons for support to any proposal that would betray a want of fidelity in His Majesty's Government. Under these circumstances, it would seem that, unless the people themselves take vigorous steps to show the Government that they are not going to permit this landlord robbery, the Government will do nothing to save the people. In various parts of the city steps are now being taken to organise the tenants to refuse all increases of rent imposed since the war started."[3]

1. Forward, June 5 1915.
2. Ibid.
3. Forward, June 5 1915.

The first rent strike was successful after Harland and Wolff's managing director refuted the factor's threat that they had asked for 150 houses for new workers[1] and supported the tenants, and the movement spread beyond South Govan continued for most of the rest of the year. It remained centred, however, in the shipbuilding areas of Govan and Partick. This was where the Women's Housing Association operated, where there was a very strong ILP branch, the Govan Trades Council, and where the local Partick paper was edited by an ILP member who was himself involved in the rent strike.[2] The rent strike was thus not 'spontaneous', but resulted from the organisation of other women by ILP women who had already been involved in the £8 Cottage agitation. It was also, of course, an issue that was central to ILP theory, as the references to landlords and landlordism showed;[3] and it was initially organised largely by those ILP members who were also anti-war. Thus John S. Taylor began his report on the "Govan Tenant's Strike":

> "At the beginning of the war our 'wise men' told us (many are still telling the same tale) that our class differences were set aside, that we were a united nation, and that ALL would make sacrifices for the Commonwealth. These past nine months have proved how false was this prophecy. Sacrifices have been made, but not by ALL. The workers have made great sacrifices - some of the masters have made great fortunes."[4]

1. Ibid. John Dickenson wrote to the Tenants Defence Committee: "We are very pleased to hear that the tenants of Govan district propose refusing to pay these increased rents, and we sympathise entirely with them. We trust that the legislature will intervene to annul all the increases which have recently taken place and to prevent any further increases, as it seems to us there is absolutely no justification for them." See also, Ibid, June 12 1915 for role of S. Harland and Wolff; in victory.

2. Andrew Hood was editor of the Partick Gazette.

3. During the rent strike Forward campaigned to sell Johnston's Our Noble Families, with an advertisement which read "Proves that all Huns do not live across the Ocean. Gives you a clear insight into what is meant by 'Our Country'."

4. Forward, June 5 1915.

Wheatley then raised the case of dependents of soldiers being evicted in Shettleston and elsewhere, demanding that the Council ask the Government to make such evictions illegal and use its influence meantime to protect them from eviction. At the vote Wheatley was defeated by 46 to 34, but the 34 included many old Liberals, including John Battersby[1].

In July the house factors again proposed a rent rise[2] and by August there was another wave of rent strikes centred in Govan[3]. An evening demonstration was organised and workgate meetings held at Stephens, Harland and Wolff, Shieldhall and Fairfields. At these meetings collections were taken to support the Glasgow Labour Party Housing Committee[4].

In September strikes against rent increases became widespread[5] and in October there was a massive demonstration, mostly of women to the Town Council. Some banners displayed were patriotically anti-Landlord:

> "We are fighting Landlord Huns"..."Defending our homes against Landlord Tyranny. We want Justice"..."Defence of the Realm: Government must protect our Homes from Germans and Landlords or the people will protect themselves". 5

But the most common banner was the simple - "We are not removing".

1. Forward, June 19 1915.
2. Ibid, July 24 1915. Forward ran a series of articles by Paterson in July on the land question attacking the Liberals as landlords.
3. Ibid, August 28 1915.
4. Ibid, Harry Hopkins organised these meetings.
5. Ibid, September 18 1915.

By late October some 10-15,000 tenants were on strike[1]. They had won concessions from the Government of the promise of a Court of Inquiry and from the factors that they would not raise the rents of sailors' and soldiers' dependents[2]. More significantly, however, two huge crowds had successfully protected the homes of two Partick tenants, Andrew Hood[3] and an old age pensioner, threatened with eviction:

> "The Partick shipyard workers turned up at the scenes of the proposed evictions in their labouring garb, and many of them told me that they had decided not to resume work on Monday if any evictions took place." 4

Dollan's report added that the rent strike was spreading all over Scotland and "the ILP branches in other towns and villages where tenants are not yet in rebellion ought to take the lead on this question"[5].

By late November the strikes were still spreading and some 25,000 tenants were involved[6]. Forward declared:

> "Now that we have brought the Government so far, perhaps the Labour Party will see that the legislation which is proposed conforms to our wishes...

1. Ibid, October 9 1915. The same issue contained a reprint from the Glasgow Herald about Vorwaerts, the German Social-Democratic Party paper, which was also agitating on evictions and rent increases.
2. Forward, October 23 1915
3. Ibid. Hood's brother had been wounded in the trenches and was living at the house.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid,November 20 1915: "The latest districts to be affected include Anderston, Maryhill and Ibrox, while hundreds of new recruits have been obtained in Govan and Partick. In South Govan the original rent strikers, who have not yet paid increases intimated five months ago, were notified of a further increase last week. The notification of the second increase has caused great hilarity in the district".

> "The Labour Party need not accept any Bill which does not provide for pre-war rents, as the Scottish tenants won't pay an increase of rents" 1.

A demonstration took place in Partick:

> "The Partick tenants held the most imposing demonstration ever held in the district on Saturday, and the clean tidy appearance of the women and children demonstrators won much approval. Worthy of notice was the large number of munition workers who took part" 2.

Four shipyards held meetings to discuss the situation of the 18 Partick tenants being summonsed to attend the small debt court, and Harland and Wolff's workers in Govan "threatened to attend the Court in Body to see that justice is done"[3]. On Wednesday, November 25 1915, the 18 tenants went to Court accompanied by a crowd of about 8,000[4] and came away with victory: the promise by the Government of a Rent Registration Act to restore rents to the 1914 levels.

The ILP clearly saw the rent struggle as a political campaign. They had an election programme on housing and a definite set of anti-Landlord beliefs which fitted the rent struggle, and they were ready to take it to the shipyard gates, to involve the tenants and the women[5].

1. Ibid.
2. Forward, November 20 1915.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid, November 27 1915. A deputation of rent strikers met Sheriff Lee, including a delegate from the Dalmuir shipyard and one from the "principal Engine shops on the Clyde". Both reported their workshops were only at work by a very small majority. It is possible that the ILP sought to restrain workers from striking, and confine them to only sending deputations, especially since they were already convinced that legislation was just round the corner.
5. Melling, op cit, p.17, is wrong to argue: "There were four separate components of the Rents Movement of 1915 ... the largely unorganised women and housewives ... the men at the point of production ... the two main political forces in Glasgow, the ILP and the BSP ... the various groups of the women's movement ..."; "component" one was often married to "two" who were sometimes members of "three" while "four" was largely integrated into the ILP.

The rent strike showed what might have happened if the Clyde Workers Committee had chosen to raise political issues as well as industrial ones and to oppose the Munitions Act outright. Maclean's famous break with Gallacher was thus not between 'utopian' and 'realistic' revolutionaries: both a political and an industrial strategy were possible.

The Fight against Conscription and Dilution

In May 1915 after the Parliamentary Labour Party voted for Henderson to accept Cabinet office[1] disillusionment with the Labour Party peaked in the ILP. Tom Johnston called on the ILP,

> "In the interests of Socialism and Labour: in the interests of the Poor: in the interests of the Exploited Classes: in the interests of the Trades Unions: nay, not only that, but for the sake of their own political preservations and strengths, the Independent Labour Members in the House of Commons must take over the business of the official opposition."[2]

The Labour Alliance was in more danger than in 1909 or during the syndicalist upsurge of 1910-1914. It was saved, as was the unity of the ILP itself, by conscription.

All the different elements within the ILP - even the 'see it through' tendency of MacDonald and 'Rob Roy' - united in opposition to conscription. And after this new unity was achieved, the older generation of ILP leaders in Glasgow who had straightforwardly opposed the war until then, drew back from such a "revolutionary" conclusion as the dissolution of the Labour Alliance, and were thus pulled to the right.

In June 1915 Forward asked "What is Behind this Talk of Conscription?"[3] and its answer included all three themes which dominated its subsequent arguments. The first was against the "home-bred Prussians" imposing their "Conscription Kulture" on Britain[4]. The second theme

1. Forward, May 29 1915. The vote was carried 17 to 11; of the 11, four ILP members then refused to make the vote unanimous.
2. Ibid. Willie Stewart also had a front page article driving home the lesson: "the war does not cancel capitalism: the war...is saving capitalism."
3. Ibid, June 5 1915.
4. Forward, June 5 1915, argued conscription was unnecessary since nearly three million had volunteered for armed service and four million out of the seven million men eligible for military service were engaged in essential war work: "The demand is not for more candidates for the trenches, but for a greater docility among the men at the lathe and the coal face."

was that instead of militarising the arms factories the Government should nationalise them. This argument showed the emergence of a Modern Conservative strand within ILP ideology when it suggested

> "When men realise they are toiling for the community and the nation, you get hard, honest, enthusiastic work out of them."[1]

And finally there was an appeal to Liberty.[2]

On Sunday, August 15 1915 all persons aged between 15 and 65 had to fill in a Registration Form which was collected in the following day.[3] The National Registration Act undoubtedly heightened the war scare,[4] and increasingly arguments about conscription took over from arguments about the war. In October,[5] Robert Smillie began his campaign against conscription. Forward reported,

> "Bob Smillie, at the Miners' Congress, declared that before Conscription of Labour, there must be conscription of Land and Capital. The comments of the Press the next morning proved that Conscription had been hit in the right place and effectively."[6]

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid, reprinted the letter of Dr. Clifford (the Nonconformist Church leader) to the Daily News opposing the Times' declaration that the citizen can no longer choose where and how to serve the state and arguing that voluntary service worked better because volunteers fight better.
3. Ibid, August 14 1915, which also published guidance from the No-Conscription Fellowship as to how to fill the form in.
4. Ibid, August 21 1915, pointed to an advertisement by the Glasgow Territorial Army which appeared in the Glasgow Herald: "Young Man! Don't allow your name to be entered on the 'Special Pink Form'. Avoid all appearance of compulsion by enlisting now in the Glasgow Territorials".
6. Asquith's resignation as Prime Minister in October meant that conscription was imminent. Ibid, October 23 1915, wrote: "Little did we ever think we should live to see the day when we should regard Mr Asquith's resignation from office as a disaster to the cause of human liberty in Britain.
6. Forward, October 16 1915.

And added that the first opponents of conscription had been jailed for failing to register[1]. Later that month Smillie spoke at the Hardie Memorial meeting, putting what Forward described as "the real Socialist position on Conscription":

> "I am not sure whether this audience would agree, but personally I say, should it be necessary in the minds of the people of this country that in order that this war may be carried through to a successful issue , which will render international war impossible in the future, that is, should it require all the resources of the nation, then personally I say that that ought not to be claimed wholly from the working class of the nation only (Applause). IF THERE IS GOING TO BE CONSCRIPTION, LET US HAVE CONSCRIPTION OF ALL THE LAND AND ALL THE CAPITAL OF THE COUNTRY."[2]

The sub-heading on the article was "Give us OUR country to defend". Clearly Smillie was closer to 'Rob Roy' than to Stewart[3], and Forward's editor, Johnston, was moving towards MacDonald and 'Rob Roy'.

Thus Forward fully embraced the 'popular' anti-conscription blend of state socialism and Modern Conservatism:

> "The ILP wants National Service, real National Service, you understand - not the Body-snatching-while-Capital-escapes business that Lords Northcliffe, Milner and Curzon are yelling for, but the real thing. 'All in' is what is wanted, and the sole reason for the existence of the ILP has been to secure a state of society in which ALL is in.
> "If the country is in danger, nationalise it and you offer the widest possible inducement to every man to step in. He is then defending his own property, and not some other body's property."[4]

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid, October 30 1915. Smillie added: "Then there would be no lack of volunteers. We would have the opportunity of defending OUR country and not somebody else's."
3. Ibid. In November, Johnston allowed Sir George Magill to argue "Why an Anti-German Union" - there are no capitalists and workers in Belgium now, only slaves; ibid November 21 1915. Johnstone replied that the safety of the nation demanded nationalisation. The Anti-German Union later tried to break up the April 1916 ILP Conference in Newcastle, see Ibid, May 20 1916.
4. Ibid.

The Glasgow Trades Council could also wholeheartedly embrace these politics and it joined the anti-conscription campaign along with the CWC and ILP. It protested against the Corporation's cancellation of Anti-Conscription meetings in the City Halls[1] and in January passed a motion condemning,

> "compulsory attestation or any other form of compulsory military service" which is "uncalled for by the state of the army, as dangerous to the stability of the Nation and totally opposed to the principles of British Freedom and respectfully urges that the passing of such proposals will lead to serious social and industrial trouble in this district."[2]

It jointly called a demonstration against conscription with the ILP, the CWC and the BSP in January 1916[3], and offered the services to the Joint Committee on Conscription of three of its members as workgate speakers.[4] But its opposition fell short of calling or organising for political strike action against conscription. Having failed to mount a fight against the Munitions Act, the Trades Council, like the ILP and CWC, had accepted too many of the assumptions behind conscription to be able to deliver a united effective blow against conscription.[5]

1. Glasgow Trades Council, Minutes, November 23 1915. Following this cancellation the Glasgow Labour councillors staged a protest in the Council meeting and were all suspended, see Forward, January 1 1916. The meetings had been booked by the Herald League and the ILP. A Free Speech Committee meeting was also cancelled, see above, p.458, footnote 3.
2. Ibid, January 5 1916.
3. Ibid, January 12 1916.
4. Ibid, January 26 2926.
5. This was despite serious attempts to link up with the Lanarkshire and Fife miners and other industrial centres, see The Worker, January 8, 29, 1916.

In December 1915, Lloyd George visited Glasgow and was howled down when he described the Government-owned munitions factories as "socialist factories"[1]. When Forward gave its own version of this meeting instead of the official one, it was temporarily suppressed, as was Maclean's Vanguard.[2] But Forward shared the same assumption as Lloyd George: in an article on sale during Lloyd George's visit called "State Socialism saves £20 millions from metal exploiters" it explained that the national shell factories had cut the price of 18lb shells by 40 per cent and of Howitzer ammunition by 30 per cent.[3] This ambiguity repeated itself elsewhere. While arguing for amendments to the Munitions Act, for example, Forward also published Walter Newbold's biting exposures of the arms industry.[4]

In this situation both Maclean and Wheatley developed different strategies to that pursued by the Clyde Workers' Committee. The CWC's central demand was workshop control. The Socialist pointed out in February 1916 that the CWC was not calling for the Government to take over all munitions factories:

> "Our demand is:- That the Government must take over all industries and natural resources and vest Organised Labour with direct share in their management."[5]

1. Forward, January 1 1916.
2. Lloyd George argued that Forward had been a persistent offender against the interests of industrial peace, see Forward, February 5, 1916.
3. Forward, December 25 1915.
4. Ibid, December 25 1915, January 1 1916.
5. The Socialist, February 1916. This also reproduced the report for which the Forward was suppressed, adding that after the meeting broke up a march took place to Glasgow Green where a meeting was addressed by Hopkins, Tom Clark, Maclean, McManus, Wheatley and Muir.

This was in practice close to the ILP's call for state-owned munitions factories[1], and infuriated those revolutionaries in Glasgow who wished to strengthen the anti-war struggle.[2] It also differed quite significantly from the SLP's previous opposition to state socialism.

Maclean argued that the CWC should oppose the Munitions Act as the miners had done with a political strike, that those fined should go to prison rather than pay up, for resistance to speed up, for the CWC to invite delegates from industries outside engineering, and for the CWC to link up directly with the Scottish miners.[3] He argued for immediate strike action to prevent the erosion of workers' rights and opposed the SLP's orientation of propaganda now and action later:

> "The only way to retain our freedom - the small shred of it we now possess - is by solid combination as a class. The only weapon we can use today is the strike. We urge our comrades to be ready to use that weapon to prevent the

1. This was also Lloyd George's position that was howled down at the Christmas Day meeting; see Forward, January 1 1916, Worker, January 8 1916.

2. W. Gallacher, op cit, p. 60-61, described how Muir's dilution proposals caused Peter Petrov, the exiled Russian revolutionary and associate of Maclean, to launch "an almost incredible attack on Johnny Muir and the other members of the SLP who were in the leadership of the movement."

3. Vanguard, October 1915, MacDougall argued the South Wales miners' strike should be followed; Ibid, November 1915, Maclean wrote on the Fairfield fines: "It is up to the unofficial committee now to forge ahead...Unless the Clyde men act quickly, determinedly, and with a clear object in view they are going to be tied up in a knot...Quick and firm action is needed if slavery is going to be abolished and conscription defeated."

> coming of absolute chattel slavery. "Do not be paralysed by academic quack socialists, who insist that the only occasion justifying the strike is for the establishment of socialism. These men admit that the masses are still far from socialism. That means we must defer the strike to the remote future. See how absurd the position is, and act accordingly."[1]

The SLP's strategy, Maclean argued, did not match the possibilities. It was an attempt to create a rank and file structure for after the war; to get the Government to institute workers' control in the workshops (that was all it was ready to lead a strike about); and to abolish craftism under wartime conditions where its abolition would automatically lead to an increase in munitions' production.

John Wheatley, on the other hand proposed a conciliatory approach to dilution and supported the agreement negotiated by Davie Kirkwood at Parkhead Forge. This agreed that the employers' "SOLE desire is increased output', argued, "We have every sympathy with your desire for increased output", and merely set to guarantee that whoever worked on what was originally skilled work would get paid the skilled workers' wage.[2]

The ILP and SLP strategies therefore dovetailed. In Chapter Seven it was argued that the syndicalists' attempt to ignore political questions before the First World War meant that when they were forced to confront politics they lapsed into a 'commonsense' response. Thus they tended to take over the radical ILP position which itself derived from radical Liberalism. During the First World War this same process occurred again on the Clyde Workers' Committee.

1. Ibid, December 1915.
2. Forward, February 12, 1916

Once it was clear the ILP was going to strike to nationalise the arms factories, and the SLP was not going to strike immediately to nationalise "all industries and natural resources", then all that was left of the CWC policy was control of dilution inside the workshop.[1] Against them Maclean argued for supporting all strikes during the war.[2]

1. Ibid. Point 3 in the Beardmore agreement was: "That a record of all past and present changes in practice be handed to the Convenor of Shop Stewards and by him remitted to the District Office, to be retained for future reference." Point 5 read: "No alteration shall take place in this scheme unless and until due notice is given to the workmen concerned..."

2. The CWC did not call strikes over Fairfield or Dalmuir.

The Supression of The Worker

When Forward was suppressed the CWC used the collection from the Lloyd George meeting to launch The Worker. This represented the CWC's attempt to both solidarise with the ILP and Forward and to try and establish its own network of contacts independent of the ILP. It was not a strike bulletin nor was it confined to workshop reports. It was essentially a syndicalist/Industrial unionist version of Forward,[1] with the ILP attitude to conscription.

In The Worker's first edition Gallacher argued that the trade union leaders should be the sergeants of the rank and file who would push them along the right path. While the officials each represented only one trade and had a narrow view, Gallacher argued, "the Clyde Workers' Committee have set themselves the task of co-ordinating the forces of labour".[2]

The Worker was political, but its politics directly appealed to a Liberal/Labour commonsense opposition to the Military Service Bill. The issue that dominated was the fight against the "slavery" of conscription. None of its arguments were to the left of Forward, and some were to the right:

> "We hold no brief for the shirker, either at work or war; we express no opinion with regard to him. He is not our concern; the worker is our client. So far from being slackers ourselves, we work day and night at one thing and another. But we would ask those who welcome conscription from a desire to see so-called 'shirkers' made to do their so-called duty, to count the cost of this emotional luxury, and to put it to themselves, whether they have a right to barter for a momentary indulgence of spleen the liberties so dearly won by our fathers."[3]

1. The Worker, January 8, 22, 29 1916.
2. Ibid, January 8 1916.
3. The Worker, January 22 1916.

This article by ILP member John Paton[1] was carried on the front page of an issue almost entirely devoted to the anti-conscription fight and to the Glasgow Green demonstration aginst Military Service[2].

The only article to appear in The Worker that linked all the political questions facing the Glasgow working class was the one for which it was suppressed: "Should the Workers Arm?"[3]. Although his reply was in the negative, the article was clearly subversive because it connected the "chains" of the Munitions Act, the "gate before our lips" (restrictions on free speech), the "plunder" of rising food prices and the new conscription law. In the same edition, the anarchist Guy Aldred wrote that the Clyde workers have "the industrial-political power" to defeat conscription, but asked "Have they the will?".

The conscription struggle was the one political question, given its total affront to the Glasgow Liberal/Labour commonsense, on which the CWC might have led an industrial Struggle. Yet the opportunity was missed and the CWC was broken by the introduction of dilution and the deportations which followed The Worker's suppression.

Between January and April 1916 the CWC's strategy was put to the test. Firstly, there was the prosecution of forty Dalmuir workers who organised a 'stay in' strike to defend their shop steward, sacked for attending the Lloyd George Christmas Day meeting. The men were fined

1. Paton was later associated with the National Guilds Movement as was John Wheatley.
2. Consciption was attacked as opening the door to "slavery" in the factories: "Having given them the right to claim your body, there will be little use protesting against interference with your wages.", see Ibid.
3. Ibid, January 29 1916.
4. Probably written by Willie Reagan, ILP councillor and postman.

and refused to pay. But just as with Fairfields, the CWC failed to give a lead.[1]

At the end of January the Dilution Commissioners arrived in Glasgow to get agreements working in the principal factories. Although one 'craft conservative' factory in Johnstone remained totally opposed, the Glasgow factories where the ILP held sway accepted dilution[2]: Parkhead Forge and Weirs led the way by accepting the Commission's policy of forming Joint Shop Committees of management and shop stewards[3] and the rest followed.

At the beginning of February the police raided the SLP Press to stop The Worker coming out. Gallacher, Muir[4], Walter Bell and Maclean were arrested later. But only some 10,000 workers downed tools until Gallacher, Bell and Muir were released on Bail, and the strike could not be held to win Maclean's release and the dropping of charges.[5]

The ILP's strategy then triumphed within the CWC and when the next challenge to the CWC came in the form of deportations of its leading elements, Wheatley was able to persuade Gallacher and Muir to go to London to negotiate about the deportations rather than call a strike[6]. The deportations arose after Parkhead Forge workers struck in March 1916 against the curtailing of Kirkwood's rights

1. Hinton, op cit, p. 136-137.
2. Ibid, p. 140-146.
3. Ibid; Hinton argues the Commissioners had to convince the employers that dilution was useful and the workers that it was harmless.
4. Muir negotiated a dilution agreement at Barr and Stroud's while awaiting trial. ibid, p. 158.
5. Ibid, p. 147-148.
6. Hinton, op cit, p. 158.

as factory convenor. First Kirkwood and two fellow stewards were deported; then Messer and McManus from Weirs followed, leading to a strike at Weirs followed by strikes at some other firms. But the number of workers out was only half that of February. Two more Parkhead Forge and three more Weirs' shop stewards were then also deported[1]. Although Gallacher and Muir were still at liberty in Glasgow, they did not make a general call for strike action[2].

In April 1916, while workers who had struck against the deportations were being fined for offences against the Munitions Acts, The Worker trial took place in Edinburgh. Gallacher and Muir argued they weren't opposed to war production and had not led strikes[3]. They were both jailed for a year. Charged under DORA for his anti-war meetings Maclean defended himself as an anti-war socialist and was sentenced to three years' imprisonment[4].

Forward reappeared in February 1916 with a highly defensive protest as its suppression:

> "Looking through the files of Forward we can find no hint of any incitement to strike. The only mention of strikes that we can trace is of Rent Strikes. The only big industrial strike of the Clyde since war began was the Engineers' Strike in February, 1915. Neither before nor during the strike did we publish a single line about it, nor did we even mention that it was taking place. For this we were keenly criticised by some of our friends, for the Glasgow Press published details and

1. Ibid, p. 155-157.
2. J. T. Murphy, Preparing for Power, p. 123, quoted in Hinton, op cit, p. 157, argued in 1932 that Gallacher had opposed strike action on the grounds that it was against the aim of the CWC, which was to build an industrial organisation in engineering.
3. Muir used his resignation as Socialist editor as evidence he was not anti-war.
4. N. Milton, op cit, p. 121-125.

> descriptions of it. Our only mention of its existence occurred after it was over, when, in answer to criticisms, we declared in our issue of 20th March that we would not touch the subject of strikes during the war. And we have not departed from that rule"[1].

Thereafter it was even more cautious in its anti-war stance. Yet its reappearance at the point when The Worker was suppressed, Maclean was jailed and the CWC was taken on and defeated by the Commissioners, enabled the ILP to retain and renew its influence in the aftermath of the deportations.

The Forward Defence Fund[2] to meet the legal and business costs incurred by the suppression raised money during the six weeks after the police raid. Table 21 gives a breakdown of the political support it received. What is clear is that by the beginning of 1916, while ILP (and the Catholic Socialist Society) organisation was in quite good shape in Glasgow, the sharpening of political differences on the war question and the Labour Alliance meant the BSP and SLP hardly gave any support to the Defence Fund at all. Individual BSP and SLP members, of course, would have contributed to many of the collections organised by ILP branches or by ILP members inside different workplaces. But the fairly short list of trade union and workplace donations to the Defence Fund in Table 21 suggests that their support was limited and that the CWC's network was independent of the ILP.

The ILP kept alive the question of the ten deportees after March 1916, and Wheatley was Treasurer of the Dependant's Fund. The donations to this fund suggest that if the CWC had been under a

1. Forward, February 5 1916
2. Ibid, February 19, 26, March 4, 11, April 1.

Table 21 Forward Defence Fund, 1916. Political Support

Name of Organisation	Branch	No. of donations recorded separately
Independent Labour Party Glasgow Federation	Govan Central	5
	Bridgeton	8
	Dennistoun	17
	Springburn	9
	Anniesland, Shettleston and Tollcross	7
	Govanhill	1
	Kingston	4
	St Rollox	9
	City	1
	Camlachie	10
	Partick	6
	Kinning Park	8
	Hutchestown	6
Independent Labour Party	Clydebank	36
	Paisley	4
	Johnston	1
	Larkhall	5
	Dunfermline	4
	Bathgate	3
	Law	6
	Douglas	1
	Douglas Water	7
	Edinburgh Central	1
	Blantyre	10
	Milngavie	5
	Greenock	3
	Perth	6
	Dundee	17
	Plean	1
	Bathgate	3
	Dalry	1
	Gourock	9
	Dumbarton	5
	Kirkintilloch	8
	Broxburn	4
	Lanark	1
	Galashiels	1
	Motherwell	11
	North Belfast	1
	Hackney	1
Catholic Socialist Society		42
British Socialist Party	Gourock	1
	Falkirk	1

Table 21 Forward Defence Fund, 1916 — Trade Union and Workplace Support

Name of Organisation	Branch	No. of donations recorded separately.
Clyde Workers Committee		3
Paisley Trades Council		1
Falkirk & District Trades Council		1
Amalgamated Society of Woodcutting Machinists	Govan	1
Lanarkshire Miners' County Union	Coalburn, No.15	1
Gas Workers' Union		3
Gas & General Workers' Union		1
Amalgamated Union of Cooperative workers		1
Postmen's Federation		1
Workers' Union		2
Irish Transport and General Workers' Union		1
"Some Babcock & Wilcox men"		1
"A few workers in Harland & Wolff"		1
Shieldhall Co-op Boot Factory - Benchmen -		1
Finishing Dept.		1
Meadowside Yard - Joiners & sympathisers		2
"Howden's workmen"		1
John Brown & Co. - Tool department		1
Barr & Strouds workers		1
Scotstoun Coventry Ordnance works		2
Beardmore's, Dalmuir		1
Parkhead Forge		1
Parkhead Breech Shop		1
Arrol's Parkhead - Crane department		1
Atlas Steel Foundry, Armadale - moulders		1

different leadership it might have been possible to revive it much earlier than occurred. Thus of the approximately £1,800 collected, all the donations from workshops came via the CWC (nearly £800)[1].

Kirkwood spoke for the Clyde deportees at the October 1916 Labour Party Conference. He attended as Glasgow District ASE delegate[2] and was replied to by both Henderson (who had toured with Lloyd George) and Brownlie, Glasgow ASE district official at the time. Both were received quite quietly. Henderson said:

> "They (the CWC) demanded control in the workshops, but that was not the time for a revolution like that. (Hear, hear) Then where was the Christmas morning meeting - the famous meeting (Laughter). Hundreds of hecklers (Laughter). I am a Scotsman myself, but I never saw anything like it in my life. The Clyde Workers Committee declined to allow the meeting to proceed (No). For the subsequent administrative action he had no responsibility. He was never consulted. When things like that are done we have two alternatives, if we disapprove. We can resign (Cheers). We would be resigning every week if we would please some of you (Cheers)"[3].

Bob Smillie answered that Henderson and Brownlie were avoiding "the crucial point in the whole affair - deportation without charge or trial". But this too evaded the point that Gallacher, Muir, Bell and Maclean had been jailed under DORA, and instead of facing this reality, the Conference instead gave Kirkwood's declaration that he would return to Glasgow a great ovation[4]. It also took up Henderson's suggestion of a Committee of Enquiry, but did not elect the ILP's

1. Herbert Highton papers, University of Glasgow. Treasurer's report on the Fund.
2. Forward, October 6 1917 announced his election as the delegate.
3. Ibid, February 3 1917.
4. Forward, February 3 1917. Forward gave much greater coverage to the deportees than it did to those in jail.

nominee, Johnston, to sit on it[1].

Later, however, Forward suggested that an enquiry would be misplaced because the deportations were clearly 'a mistake':

> "The deportees have in effect won their battle. It is generally agreed that their attitude about shop management was misrepresented by Lloyd George; that, at the same time, they were disloyal to their Trade Union leaders, and were trying to force to the front a rival organisation"[2].

Yet despite this clear shift in the ILP's anti-war stance to a simple anti-conscription and then pro-peace Liberalism, it was still Wheatley who chaired the public reception given to Muir of the SLP and Gallacher of the BSP when they were released from jail in February 1917[3].

For while the deportations had removed the two ILPers, Kirkwood and Messer, from the CWC and placed the SLP in a good position to monopolise its remains, the SLP's own best members on the CWC, McManus, Muir and Clarke, were also deported. In their absence after a brief 'Free Speech' agitation against the deportations[4], the SLP reverted to its customary negative attitude to all immediate struggles. The Socialist wrote in April 1916:

> "Anyone desiring to join the SLP must be carefully examined... until the actual struggle takes place for conquest of the State its work must be, fundamentally, propaganda"[5].

Thus the Socialist's treatment of the Irish Easter Rebellion in 1916 was to ignore it until September 1916, when it condemned the official

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid, February 10 1917.
3. Ibid, February 24 1917.
4. Socialist, March 1916
5. Ibid, April 1916.

report[1] and published a statement from 'New Ireland' which condemned "atrocities committed by all armies irrespective of nationality"[2].

Forward's immediate response to the 1916 Easter Rising was antagonistic:

> "The mysterious and astounding part of the insensate rebellion last week was the fact that James Connolly was not only implicated in it, but seems to have been one of its organisers. All Connolly's past history, his quiet, unassuming, retiring habits, his published writings, his wide historical knowledge, marked him out as being about the last man who would encourage much less mix himself up with, an obviously futile insurrection, wherein hundreds of lives would be lost to no end or purpose. And not only a futile insurrection, but one in which the insurrectionists were apparently being used as pawns and tools of the German Government"[3].

But two weeks' later Forward contrasted the Dublin executions with the treatment given Carson and referred to the total revulsion of the American people at the murder of the Irish rebels by the British Army[4]. The turn round was partly due to genuine anger at Sheehy Skeffington's execution when he wasn't even involved in the Rising, and partly because of the evident support for Connolly shown in both Irish and trade union circles. The Catholic Socialist Notes column confirmed the new sympathy to socialism among the Irish:

> "Connolly's death has removed a mountain of prejudice against Socialism. 'He was a Socialist and he died for Ireland.' This is the common remark among the Irish population. They are now interested in Connolly and

1. Ibid, September 1916, because the report failed to deal with the brutality of the British Army.
2. Ibid.
3. Forward, May 6 1916.
4. Ibid, May 20 1916. It also quotes John Dillon, MP, on the treachery of John McNeil, and stresses that Connolly was executed while wounded.

in Connolly's views"[1],

The Glasgow ILP, however, still viewed Ireland as a candidate for the Liberal solution of Home Rule. Forward argued a parliament "would satisfy all the remains of the craving for a separate Irish Nation" and added: "The Sinn Fein movement deserves no sympathy from the Irish Socialist"[2].

In July and August 1916, with its anti-conscription campaign smashed by the force of the Government's counter-offensive, Glasgow ILP launched a Women's Peace Negotiation Crusade. Its culminating meeting, however, had an attendance of only 5,000 people[3] - similar numbers to those who attended the first peace demonstration in 1914[4]. In the Autumn, Gallacher worked with Maxton and other ILP members trying to re-establish some of the speaking pitches that had been broken up early in 1915. Maxton's approach was to duck the issues of war and peace altogether[5], focusing on the food shortage.

Thus by the end of 1916 the struggle had come full circle. From peace to industrial to political, back to industrial and then back to peace again. Glasgow's evolutionary socialism had been the most left-wing in Britain. In the BSP Maclean broke out of its constraints,

1. Ibid, June 17 1916. When there was an attempt to dismiss Maxton from the Glasgow School Board in June, it was the Irish Catholics who defended him; see, ibid, July 1 1916. Harry McShane recalls arguing the case for Connolly and winning little support inside the ILP, see McShane & Smith,. op cit, p.82-83.
2. Forward, November 4 1916.
3. Ibid, July 15 1916. The Women's peace Negotiations Crusade was run by 6 or 7 ILP women.(Including Agnes Dollan, Agnes Hardie, Annie Swain, Helen Crawfurd. Many of the women were in the Rent and Food Agitations.)
4. See above, p. 449.
5. John McNair, James Maxton: Beloved Rebel, p.50.

became a revolutionary and spent most of the war in jail. A few individuals in the SLP, like McManus, began to combine SLP 'revolutionism' with immediate struggle; but he was deported from Glasgow for 18 months. While within the Glasgow leadership, evolutionary socialism entrenched itself and shifted to the right in the 'unity' against conscription. Moreover, the leading position of the ILP in Glasgow, coupled with the political and organisational weaknesses of the BSP and SLP, meant that it was the ILP which grew out of the political and industrial struggles on the Clyde in 1915-1916. It doubled in membership between April 1915 and April 1917.[1] By February 1917, on the eve of the Russian Revolution, the ILP had 112 branches in Scotland and some 3,000 members.[2]

1. Forward April 21 1917. Glasgow membership had risen 116% in 2 years of which 1916-1917 saw a rise of 57%.
2. Forward March 9 1918.

The War and the Russian Revolution

The strength of the ILP in Glasgow and the absence of an alternative meant that despite continued divisions within the ILP on the question of the war, and despite its political distance from the Russian Bolsheviks, it was still the ILP which was the principal beneficiary of the upturn in political and industrial activity that followed the February Revolution of 1917. By March 1918, the ILP claimed 167 Scottish branches with a membership of 10,000.[1]

The Glasgow ILP remained totally split on the war. In February 1917 Forward's Catholic Socialist Notes reported a Catholic Socialist Society meeting :

> "Mr. Harry Hopkins roused our meeting to some tune on Sunday last. His withering scolding of the Labour leaders of today who are traitors to the working class (and the little budding traitors of tomorrow) seemed quite up our street. A word of praise for John Maclean brought forth a great wave of applause, which, could it have penetrated prison walls, would have done John's rebel heart good."[2]

Johnston, Forward's editor, however, now supported MacDonald's 'see it through' position, and in March 1917 he launched an attack on the Bermondsey resolution for the ILP Conference, describing it as totally pacifist. Reagan replied that the attack on the Bermondsey resolution was an attack on all Conscientious Objectors (like himself), and a let out to present Labour MPs.[4] Johnston characterised Reagen's position as one of ineffective "non-resistance". He now supported 'national defence' arguing that Britain had to retain an army and navy if other

1. Ibid.
2. Forward, February 3 1917. This column of 'Notes' also suggested that the disappearance of the 'Notes' during 1916 when Forward went down to only four pages because of the 'paper shortage' was not true.
3. Forward, March 10 1917. Ibid, January 5th 1918 reported that Reagan was involved in a dispute in the Post Office because they wanted to reduce his wages by £1 a week because he was a C.O.
4. Ibid, March 17 1917.

countries did, while Reagan was arguing for a unilateral declaration of peace of Britain.[1]

In April 1917 Reagan seconded the Bermondsey resolution - "as an anti-war speech it was about the finest we have ever listened to"[2] - that was finally carried by 226 votes to 56. Johnston had given way for MacDonald to reply, and Forward claimed that the Scots votes were equally divided[3]. And after the Conference Johnston continued to argue that the ILP had placed itself out of serious international politics because of its position that "even in the event of an invasion of one's country, the Socialists of the belligerent countries should not fight".[4]

Just as in the 1914 anti-war campaign, the ILP was split within the 1917 peace campaign. This time, however, the split was deeper: between those who believed in a negotiated peace and those who believed socialists should not support 'their' country in war.

Yet even this division was overcome when their meetings were attacked by the Scottish Patriotic Federation[5], and even more crucially, when the confidence of the whole movement turned up. Even the Glasgow Herald[6] estimated the 1917 May Day demonstration as 70,000-strong. Forward[7] described it as 100,000. And the largest contingents were the engineers, the railwaymen, the ILP branches and the 'No Conscription Fellowship' carrying their "Stop the War" banners.

Forward argued that the movement turned upwards because of the Russian Revolution. In July 1917, when 20,000 demonstrated on Glasgow

1. Ibid
2. Ibid, April 14 1917. Stewart supported Reagan, see Ibid, April 21 1917.
3. Ibid, April 21 1917.
4. Ibid, April 28 1917
5. Forward, May 19, May 26 1917. Jamieson, who tried to break up Maclean's Bath Street meetings in 1915, tried to break up MacDonald's.
6. Glasgow Herald, May 7 1917.
7. Forward, May 12 1917.

Green in a renewed Women's Peace Crusade,[1] it wrote:

> "Thanks to our Russian comrades, the ILP and Women's Peace Party are now taking the offensive with increased vigour."[2]

Willie Stewart welcomed the Russian Revolution in the pages of Forward on March 24th 1917. He was an "evolutionary socialist" who believed in the "one-step-at-a-time constitutional methods of the Independent Labour Party" but now saw the Russian Revolution as the start of something new:

> "Just as it is the Russian people who have destroyed Czarism; so it is only the German people who can destroy Kaiserism."[3]

February, he believed, was only a phase in a "great spiritual and social development" which would destroy capitalism as well as Czarism:

> "We may take it that the Revolution is not yet accomplished and will not be for some years to come."[4]

In June 1917 25,000 greeted Russian soldiers at Glasgow Green, but the resolutions passed were still on the three main campaigns of the ILP: calling for Davenport's resignation because of food shortages,[5] against the freedom of the city being given to Lloyd George;[6] and against increased expenses for councillors.

1. Ibid, July 14 1917. The Parkhead Forge peace petition led Beardmore to start a newspaper, Parkhead Forge News, which carried Psalm 28 on its front page: "Draw me not away with the wicked and with the workers of iniquity: which speak peace to their neighbours but mischief is in their hearts."
2. Ibid. In February 1918, it was the Women's Peace Crusade that blocked Christabel Pankhurst from speaking by singing "The Red Flag". Forward, February 23 1918.
3. Ibid, March 26 1917.
4. Forward, March 24 1917.
5. The ILP had led women's demonstration to the Town Council to protest at the potato shortage. The Lord Provost was called 'Half a potato Dunlop' because he had said he only needed to eat half a potato a day. Forward, May 17 1917, said no-one could afford to buy potatoes.
6. The Labour councillors had been suspended from the Council for staging a protest against this action.

The enthusiasm with which Liberal, Labour Party and ILP workers welcomed the February Revolution meant it was hardly surprising that the Leeds Convention of June 1917 was virtually unanimous. Wheatley, who represented the Catholic Socialist Society, reported that while it was inspiring to be among 1,200 delegates,

> "whose hearts were throbbing with a hatred of capitalism and all its crimes, the Conference lacked driving force.... The platform speeches were excellent oratory but poor guidance. Everyone pointed to the Russian road but none was ready to lead the way."[1]

He actually called it the "Peace Conference in Leeds"[2] 'Rob Roy' was also sceptical:

> "A candid critic with some knowledge of the Labour and Socialist movement might say a good deal about the Leeds Convention. For those who genuinely seek guidance, its most disturbing feature was its unanimity. No one acquainted, even superficially, either with Socialist or Labour organisations in this country, will for a moment believe that three or four dissentients out of 1100 delegates is a fair reflection of the opinion concerned towards such resolutions as those passed..... Leeds was a scratch Convention of enthusiasts for one particular cause... One may approve the end, while disagreeing with and profoundly distrusting the means."[3]

Later in June another 20,000 people demonstrated on Glasgow Green to protest against the holding up of the British Socialist delegation to Russia.[4] It also called for the release of John Maclean, and this happened one week later.[5] On his release Maclean made an appeal for the release of Maxton and the Petroffs. He declared his support for the Russian Revolution and "held out the hand of fraternity to

1. Forward, June 16 · 1917.
2. Ibid.
3. Forward June 16 1917.
4. Ibid, June 23 1917. MacDonald and Jowett were held up by Wilson and Tupper of the Seamen and Firemen's Union.
5. Ibid, June 30 · 1917. He was released as a 'ticket of leave' prisoner..

German workers."[1]

The year following Maclean's imprisonment and the deportations had, however, revealed the organisational weakness of the Marxist left on Clydeside. It has been the ILP which organised the peace campaigns of 1916 and 1917, ran the Dependents' fund, resisted the Scottish Patriotic Federation, and generally kept the Clyde Labour movement together. Thus the meeting to greet Maclean on his release in July 1917 was half ILP and half BSP. Tom Johnston was in the chair and the speakers were MacDougall, Maxton, Jack Smith, E.C. Fairchild (London BSP), Kirkwood and Gallacher.[2]

In January 1918 MacDonald's Scottish meetings were packed and thousands had to be turned away.[3] The ILP was still benefiting from the leftward trend unleashed by the two Russian Revolutions.

MacDonald's speeches remained peace speeches[4] but with a difference. Instead of arguing in the tradition of Liberalism, of 'the classes versus the masses', MacDonald now spoke of the 'democracies' versus the governments. The problem with the war was that it was the

1. Ibid, July 14 1917, also published the telegram sent to Maclean from Russia:"Convention of All Russian Councils of Workmen's and Soldier's Deputies send their greetings to the Brave fighter for the International, Comrade Maclin, and express their hopes that the New Rise of International Solidarity will bring him his liberty.
2. Ibid. July 21 1917.
3. Forward, January 12 1918.
4. Ibid: "But, in spite of it all, the truth has a wonderful facility for spreading, like the dawn itself. I have seen the sun when it seemed sometimes to be a kind of prophecy receding in heaven itself. I have seen the sun come up in the east over clouds. I have seen the first streak of pink, and I have seen it die away. I have seen the darkness come back again as if the powers of evil were throttling and overcoming it. And then I have seen the light of the dawn stretching out and out, spreading and spreading, till at last the sun in all his majesty established himself as the ruler of the heavens. That is our ILP propaganda. (loud applause.)"

governments which spoke for the democracies:

> "So long as the democracies allow their Governments to speak for them, the democracies will never speak for themselves."

The answer to war was for the 'people' to speak honestly with each other, and MacDonald therefore called for an Ambassador to be sent to Moscow:

> "If we are out for democracy, let us back democracy. If we are out for liberty, let us support liberty. We do not agree with Lenin here and there. I don't. I would not call myself a Leninite, but what does that matter? There is this man voicing the position of the Russian democracy, striving to keep liberty in Europe, with a peace programme that is satisfactory to the people. I do not care who he is or what he is, that man should have the support of every Government that honestly means the democracies to win as the result of this war. (Applause)". [2]

MacDonald's concluding plea was for liberty everywhere and support for the ILP policy of "maintaining liberty; tearing to bits all those edicts of a military mind and a military power."[3] Although the call for Liberty was part of the old Liberal tradition, the appeal to "the people" was not: it had been denounced in Forward in the early stages of the war.[4]

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
3. Forward, January 12 1918.
4. In the early stages of the war the Forward had rejected both of the central analogies of Modern Conservatism. In March they published a cartoon of a worker walking the plank with Capitalism saying "I'm boss of this ship of state" Forward, March 13 1915. In May, a correspondent wrote "We are all one family nowadays, so the patriotic papers say", Forward, May 29 1915. Both of these arguments needed very little refutation for the readers of "Forward". The notion of 'the people' was also denounced during the Highland Land Agitation, see above p. 336 as meaning everyone from dukes to commoners. MacDonald in May 1917 showed a curious mixture of both 'old' Liberalism (the classes versus the masses) and 'new' Liberalism/Modern Conservatism ('the people') when he wrote "The ILP is not going to stand by bound and tongue-tied while official labour helps the ruling castes to silence the voices of the democracy." Forward May 19 1917.

1918: The End of the War

The Clyde Workers Committee re-emerged against the backcloth of this renewed anti-conscription peace agitation of the ILP. Although Gallacher and Muir were back in Glasgow at the time of the May 1917 national engineers' strike,[1] during a series of disputes at Parkhead Forge[2] and while wages struggles developed in the shipyards and among iron and steel workers (where the SLP was active),[3] it was on conscription that the CWC renewed its bid for industrial leadership.[4]

In January 1918 Geddes visited Glasgow to speak on the new Military Service Bill which extended the 'comb out' and military service throughout the skilled trades. The Clyde officials of the Federation of Engineering and Shipbuilding Trades had already voted to strike against the new manpower proposals, and this time the shop stewards were thus working in the context of a united movement, rather than as a rank and file organisation challenging the officials.[5] Mc Manus and Maxton spoke against Geddes, but when the resistance to further consciption was restricted to London and the Clyde, it collapsed soon afterwards.[6]

1. Hinton, op cit, p.234, points out that the shop stewards' leadership was embarrased by what appeared a 'craft' strike against the withdrawal of the trade card system. Thus Gallacher toured several districts arguing against strike action on the grounds the dispute would be soon over. In Glasgow the ILP was running three 'general' campaigns - on food shortages, peace and Russia - all of which appeared less 'sectional' than defence of the trade card scheme.
2. Ibid, p.251.
3. Ibid, p.252-3.
4. Ibid, p.256-257.
5. Ibid, p.259-267.
6. Hinton, op cit, p.259-267.

The movement, however, continued to gain confidence, and for the first time the Glasgow May Day Organising Committee[1] called a strike on a working day on May 1 1918. The demonstration was attended by 110,000[2].

Later that same month, Maclean was sentenced to five years in prison after defending himself in the dock:

> "I stand here not as the accused but as the accuser of capitalism dripping with blood from head to foot."[3]

Forward left out the part of his speech where he accused Kirkwood of co-operating in war production. On this occasion the prison authorities gave Maclean the status of a political prisoner, allowing him to have his own food brought in, and Forward commented that the Government realised to do otherwise would have contributed to industrial and political unrest in Scotland.[4]

By the end of the war it was clear that the experience had transformed aspects of the movement in Glasgow. The CWC's experience of generalising a strike was important for those who previously had been involved only in their own factories, within dual unionism, or who had supported pre-war industrial unionism, ie., the amalgamation of the existing craft unions.[5] The Irish Rising and the Russian Revolution were also instrumental in turning some SLP members completely against parliament and securing their attachment to the idea of soviets.

1. Still run by Harry Hopkins.
2. Forward, May 11 1918.
3. Ibid, May 18 1918.
4. Forward, May 18 1918.
5. Hinton, op cit, p.238-287.

The break by sections of the SLP from their evolutionary propagandist pre-war position was made possible both by their experience during the war and by a discussion of their theory of the state which started at the beginning of 1917.[1] Willie Paul had been studying the question of the state in the British Museum[2] for nearly two years before the Russian Revolution, and so when the SLP heard the news of the February Revolution they welcomed it as a vindication of <u>revolutionary</u> rather than evolutionary industrial unionism. In September 1917, the <u>Socialist</u> published four major articles: the first by Lenin on "The Progress of the Russian Revolution" arguing for a new International; the second by McManus "Industrial Unionism"; the third by Jack Murphy, the Sheffield shop steward, on "The Task before Us"; and the fourth attacking the ILP's evolutionary perspective on the state. Murphy, a new recruit to the SLP, illustrated how the Russian soviets were seen as a simple extension of the SLP's strategy of all-grades trade unionism in the workshop:

> "Our policy must be a natural development from within the trade union movement."[3]

Thus a tendency within the SLP developed after 1916 which was breaking with both the industrial and political sectarianism of its own tradition.[4] This allowed the SLP to extend its influence during the last year of the war both nationally and inside Glasgow.

1. <u>Socialist</u>, February 1917, continuing in September 1917.
2. Challinor, <u>op cit</u>,p.144, claims Paul only worked in the British Museum to hide from the police. It is also likely he spent his time there to try and fill the gap in SLP theory exposed by the First World War.
3. <u>Socialist</u>, September 1917.
4. This tendency, of people like McManus and Murphy, later split to join the Communist Party.

In June 1918 the SLP headquarters was raided by the police and the following month its two new linotype printing machines were dismantled.[1] This was principally because it had begun printing several of Lenin's pamphlets which were getting a considerable response in Britain. The SLP's appeal for money got a big response from all over the country, showing a significant growth of support (compared with the Holliday Defence Appeal)[2] in all the centres where shop stewards' committees had developed during the war. There was even a collection among Conscientious Objectors in Dartmoor prison. There were workshop collections in Glasgow from the Albion, Parkhead Forge, Harland and Wolff, North British Diesel Company, and the No. 3 Shop, Clydebank. Collections also came from the Govan Central ILP, Govan Trades Council, the Govan Branch of the Amalgamated Woodcutting Machinists and from the "Govan Collecting Committee".[3]

Despite this deeper involvement in the day-to-day life of the Labour movement, and the SLP's wholehearted support for the Russian Revolution, it had not solved all its theoretical problems. For while it had abandoned evolutionary industrial unionism and evolutionary parliamentarianism, it did not understand the role of political agitation.

1. Challinor, op cit, p.188.
2. See above, p. 459.
3. The Socialist ran a special Fund drive for new machines alongside of its normal Press Fund. See The Socialist, September 1918 - February 1919.

Thus in March 1918, the Socialist printed an article "Triumph of the SLP Tactics in Russia":

> "The SLP is the only party in this country which has compelled the ILP and BSP to realise that Socialist tactics do not mean how to juggle men into Parliament. Socialist tactics mean the education of the proletariat and the organistion of the political weapon to destroy capitalism, backed by the industrial unions taking over the means of production."[1]

The SLP still did not see "the education of the proletariat" as immediate political agitation on the key issues of the day. So while writing "we of the SLP do not intend to withhold our protest because of the victim's indiscretions", the Socialist used Maclean's imprisonment to outline the SLP's differences with him:

> "We of the SLP have never hidden our revolutionary propaganda...We advocate social revolution. We too advocate the establishment of a Socialist Republic. But there is this difference between us and Maclean that we do not advocate action until the conditions are ripe for such action."[2]

Yet Maclean's own speeches clearly helped to create the 'Red Clyde', to make 'the conditions ripe'. Thus Maclean was sentenced to three years' imprisonment in 1916 and was released after one year; and to five years' imprisonment in 1918 when he was released after six months. His release was demanded by every socialist in Glasgow and by workers who were not organised socialists. When he was released in November 1918 shortly before the General Election he was met by thousands and pulled through the streets of Glasgow in a cart on a victory parade. The SLP totally failed to grasp the role of a revolutionary as a "Tribune of the People".[3]

1. Socialist, March 1918.
2. Ibid, June 1918.
3. The SLP's and Gallacher's incomprehension of Maclean's wartime strategy were partly responsible for the origins of the myth of Maclean's madness.

Maclean had been transformed politically and theoretically by the war. Yet he also failed to draw one important lesson from the war and the Russian Revolutions; in his case it was the importance of building a revolutionary party.[1] Maclean's vision rested on the wider organisations of the class and especially on the miners.[2]

But if there was one organisation which qualified as such a 'wider' group within the Glasgow working class by 1918, it was the ILP. The war had had a major impact on it too. Perhaps the most important was that by 1918 it far outdistanced any of its rivals.[3] It again doubled in membership between January 1917 and January 1918.[4] Much of this new membership looked for both an industrial and a political lead from the ILP. Thus in January 1918 the Scottish ILP Conference voted for a 30 hour week, an "adequate living wage", agreed to "endorse and propagate the principles of Industrial Unionism"[5] and voted "in favour of the Glasgow City Branch proposal to use industrial weapons to enforce political demands".[6] In many ways these demands echoed the pre-war politics of the BSP.

1. Neither Maclean nor MacDougall were especially talented as organisation-builders, see McShane & Smith, op cit,p.115-125; but Maclean did not see the party as theoretically central.

2. Milton, op cit, p.186-187. McShane & Smith, op cit, p.103. This was why Maclean stressed the importance of a Scottish Labour College; he believed that teaching Marxist economics would ensure class conscious fighters within the mass organisations of the working class.

3. In the early 1900s, the ILP and SDF had been on equal terms.

4. Forward, January 23 1918.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

Wheatley, however, attempted to stem the tide towards Marxism. In January and February 1918 he wrote four major articles in Forward.[1] The first attacked industrial militancy using arguments which were a transition from Glasgow's radical Liberal tradition. Wheatley's case was that the worker had been exploited more as a consumer than as a producer during the war; while 30 to 40 years earlier wages were low and trade unionism was the answer, in 1918 wages were high and the problem was the American food trusts and these needed a political answer.[2]

Wheatley's second article defended the ILP's strategy of working within the Labour Party:

> "I prove the sincerity of my plea for one industrial union, by agreeing to work harmoniously with my comrades in one political union."[3]

His third article brought out differences between revolutionary and evolutionary socialism:

> "All socialists favour revolution, and our differences are mainly about methods...One is the overthrow of Capitalist society and the establishment of socialism by the force of arms and bloodshed if necessary; the other is to rely for the attainment of the same ends on reason and consititutional methods.. . . .
> "We cannot continue to entertain both policies, because they are by nature antagonistic. Sooner or later my friends who advocate in one breath the Bermondsey resolution of non-resistance and a bloody revolution must be happy with either."[4]

1. Under the title of "An Examination of some Current criticism of ILP Policy", they are called: 1- "Political Action is a Waste of Time", 2- "We favour Political Action but cannot Work with the the Labour Party", 3- "Revolution - We have no Patience with the Stupid mod; we are out for Revolution"; and 4- "The Workshops under Socialism: State Socialism is no use. We want the workshops for the Workers". Wheatley had already become a supporter of the National Guilds League. The first article on the National Guilds League appeared in Forward, March 1916.
2. Forward, January 12 1918.
3. Ibid, January 19 1918.
4. Ibid, January 26 1918.

If,Wheatley argued, it was to be a bloody revolution, then he should be told:

> "Let us at least prepare to the extent of converting our bookstalls into munitions depots, and economics classes into rifle ranges."1

His own position was clear:

> "Personally I am opposed to the use of armed force in the establishment of Socialism in this country because I regard it as immoral and impracticable."2

In his fourth article, Wheatley posed municipalisation controlled by consumers as well as producers against workshop control. The latter, he argued, would put water into the hands of water board workers. Wheatley's alternative was:

> "Democratic management of the Glasgow Tramways, the Glasgow Post Office or Parkhead Forge. The management should consist of delegates appointed by the workers and representatives of the users or consumers of the services or goods produced, the latter section slightly predominating... This Committee would give the employees democratic control of their employment whilst providing the consumers with the means of self-protection."3

Nearly two months later the Parkhead Marxism Study Circle challenged Wheatley's economics, pointing out that if the workers were exploited as consumers, then the worker who consumed least must be the least exploited. Their reply suggested:

> "The root of high prices lies in the Capitalist ownership of the means of production. The worker must hack at the roots: he will never uproot the tree of Capitalism by stroking the top leaves."4

Dennison and Bain added that the ruling class had not lived in fear and trembling of Labour Party or ILP MPs, but of the revolution, and they

1. Forward, January 25 1918.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid, February 9 1918.
4. Ibid, March 23, 30 1918. This was an SLP study circle.

concluded:

> "The only way to emancipation for the workers lies in Militant Workshop Action."[1]

Wheatley's subsequent reply revealed the ILP at the end of the First World War as the complete heir to Liberal commonsense which it was now linking with:

> "But I wish to impress upon the minds of workers the tremendous importance of political power. Food is essential to life; by controlling our food Capitalism controls us; we cannot free our food supplies by industrial action only.
> "By intelligent action the workers might win almost immediately the political control of this country, abolish landlordism, double or treble food production, place the management of agriculture in the hands of the workers, take over the shipping, purchase nationally the food required from abroad, establish working class control of distribution, set free the workers in other industries to destroy capitalism and reconstruct society on a democratic basis."[2] (My emphasis - JS)

After landlordism...democracy!

The theory that prices could be controlled was at the heart of a politics that thought in terms of the nation state and an evolutionary road to workers' power. Thus Willie Stewart, one of the 'lefts' on the issue of the war, also rejected the labour theory of value. In February 1918 he argued:

> "Prices are not determined by Labour Value. Neither unfortunately are wages; high prices are determined by scarcity."[3]

And both right and left ILPers could unite on the old argument of Industrial Unionism versus politics. Thus Johnston questioned the advantages of an industrial government would have over the "more

1. Ibid.
2. Forward, April 6 1918, which also once again carried an article on the Highland Land League. For the revival of this body see J.D. Young, op cit, p.194-196.
3. Ibid, February 9 1918.

orthodox Socialist conceptions of Government based on Citizenship" and argued that men were more than just producers. At the very least, he went on, Industrial Unionism would have to be complimented by "citizenship".[1] While Stewart questioned the strike tactic, arguing that the greatest down tools movement had been in 1914 when workers downed tools to pick up guns:

> "As for the workshop agitators they are mere novices at the game. In the art of engineering a down tools policy Lord Derby beat them even before they had begun to think of it."[2]

At the centre of a commonsense version of a world vision is an identification with both historical and contemporary events. The total identification with Russia made by working men in Glasgow thus created a problem for evolutionary socialism. In October and November 1917, Forward published a series of articles on "the Socialist Experiments" in Australia and New Zealand.[3] They described the working of state-owned farms and industries in the four states of New South Wales, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania. The description of the state fish industry in New South Wales emphasised that the price of fish was now half what it had been before the state entered the industry.[4] Much of the second article on Australia deals with the lower prices in Brisbane's state-owned shops compared with privately-owned shops in Sydney and Melbourne.[5] It ended:

> "The Independent Labour Party's policy is identically the same as the policy of the Queensland Labour Party, and would produce the same results if carried out. The

1. Ibid, February 16 1918.
2. Forward, March 16 1918.
3. Ibid, October 27, November 3, 10 1917. The articles were written by H.A. Campbell, "late Organiser, West Australia Labour Party."
4. Ibid, October 27 1917.
5. Ibid, November 3 1917.

> Independent Labour Party is the only political party that proposes to emancipate the working classes of Great Britain and Ireland."[1]

Throughout 1918 Forward continued to refer to the Queensland State Government[2], and at the end of 1918, it began to publish direct criticism of Russia.[3]

Despite the arguments being produced by the ILP leadership in November 1918 the Glasgow socialist movement still appeared united. A great demonstration supporting the German Revolution was organised on the lines of the May Day demonstrations: it was simply assumed that the same trade union branches and political bodies would be present. Gallacher, Campbell and MacDougall therefore spoke alongside Maxton, George Hardie and Kirkwood. The speakers' list was a mixture of the old leaders of the CWC, the women ILP members of the Peace Crusade, ILP councillors and ILP industrial leaders like Hopkins and Kerr.[4]

The December 1918 General Election also appeared to reflect a united socialist movement. The CWC had originally intended running their own candidates, but as Johnston pointed out, only if they were endorsed by the Labour Party could they run without splitting the movement.[5] Instead, Gallacher endorsed the Labour Party's £1,000 appeal for "Scotland for Socialism". Collection cards were distributed through

1. Forward, November 10 1917.
2. Ibid, June 8, December 7 1918.
3. Ibid, November 9 1918, published Roussanof's accusation: "We faithful to International Socialism bring definite accusations against the Bolsheviks."
4. Ibid, November 16 1918: there was no report the following week because, Forward claimed, the speeches would have got the paper shut down.
5. Ibid, February 8 1918. The letter was signed by James Messer.

the CWC and the appeal was signed by Maxton, Gallacher, Johnston, Stewart as Treasurer, and H. Macleod as Secretary.[1] In the election the CWC gave its most vocal support to the most well-known non-ILP candidate standing, John Maclean. McManus stood as an SLP candidate outside of Glasgow.

Both the ILP and Maclean had great hopes for the 1918 election, in keeping with the unity that had been achieved.

Maclean was released from prison one week before the election after serving seven months of his five year sentence. By a casting vote the Glasgow Trades Council had called for a one day strike to meet him (Forward expressed surprise at the closeness of the vote) and thousands of workers took unofficial action and went to the station to pull him through the streets on a cart.[2]

Despite the expectations of Maclean and Forward only one Labour MP was elected in Glasgow: Neil Maclean in Govan, the only successful anti-war candidate in 1908. John Wheatley missed election by 74 votes in Shettleston. Thus the two areas in Glasgow with anti-war ILP branches, and the two areas which had led the rents agitation, were the most successful overall in Glasgow. Tom Johnston blamed the general lack of results on the fact that only one quarter of the soldiers had voted - when they did vote the soldiers were voting two to one for Labour.[3]

For the Glasgow Herald the key result was the defeat of John Maclean and Jimmy MacDougall: their headline was "Bolshevism completely routed".[4] Maclean, in fact, gained 7,000 votes to the 14,000 for George Barnes, even though he stood as a revolutionary

1. Forward, November 9 1918.
2. Ibid, November 30 1918; N. Milton, op cit, p. 180-183.
3. Forward, January 4 1919.
4. Glasgow Herald, December 30 1918.

and on the platform of refusing to take his seat if he were elected.[1]

With the failure of the electoral strategy, all sections of the Glasgow movement turned to winning political demands through industrial action. The Forty Hours' strike was one supported by the ILP as well as by the CWC and Maclean. Thus even after the Russian Revolution, the Glasgow movement was still one movement. Its new aim was workers' power and workers' councils, and a section of it believed in insurrection; the divisions which existed within the movement were still not seen as being political but merely strategic.

1. Ibid.

B. LIVERPOOL

The Liverpool Labour movement, ILP or trade unions mounted no public anti-war meetings, either in the open air or in halls. Moreover, without a branch of the SLP[1], there were no lone campaigners like William Holliday who carried anti-war propaganda into the other centre of Tory democracy, the Birmingham bull-ring. Nor did the Unitarians who had led the opposition to the Boer War in Liverpool (in other centres it had been led by the SDF) respond. The LRC had no hesitation in agreeing to a "truce" for the 1914 Municipal elections. The Socialist described the situation in March 1915:

> "Patriotic rattles have been well used in Liverpool. They have been rattled by very nearly all and sundry."[2]

The 'anti-militarism' of the Liverpool ILP virtually disappeared until the anti-conscription campaign at the end of 1915. The experience of the war, of rising food prices and rents and increased intensity of work, created a brief strike wave in February and March 1915 during which the Liverpool ILP again tried to establish a Liverpool Labour paper, the Kensington Pioneer.

Its creation was a mixture of the same reasons that had led to the creation of the Liverpool Forward, 1912-1914, i.e. a strike wave in which both Protestants and Catholics had been in dispute, and which had led to the earlier Fabian/ILP paper, The Labour Chronicle (1894-5), after the previous 1889-92 strike wave, and the Labour Chronicle and T.U. Reporter 1900-1902 which had appeared in a period when sectarian strife was at its lowest ebb. Sectarian strife had disappeared after Redmond had pledged the Irish Volunteers to the Great War.

1. Holton, op cit, p.246-263. It was not possible to build a branch of the SLP because the minimum number of members for a branch was six. There was therefore no SLP branch until the Clyde deportees went to Liverpool. Whether the SLP members of the CWC deliberately chose exile in Liverpool for this reason is another matter. There was a consistent subscriber to SLP fund raising appeals in Liverpool, J. Turri.
2. Socialist, March 1915.

Despite Liverpool's patriotism this 1915 strike wave occurred at the same time as the 'Tuppence or nothing' strike in Glasgow. At the end of February the dockers struck work and won rises of one shilling a day throughout the port.[1] The employers settled with the carters for a rise that represented about "12 per cent on cartage rates".[2] Meetings of the Liverpool North-End branches of the NUR demanded that the railways war bonus be extended to all railway workers, and the Railway Clerks Association demanded a 25 per cent increase.[3]

The rise won by the dockers[4] was greater than the one penny an hour paid to Glasgow's skilled engineers. Yet even the increase paid to the carters (who didn't strike) was comparable - four shillings a week extra for teamsmen and three shillings for one horse men and motor men, with the casual labour rate rising to 5s 8d a day.[5] Lord Kitchener's telegram congratulating the men on going back to work was, however, premature.[6] A condition for the dockers' wage rise was that they took their Saturday's pay for any week in with the pay for the next week, thus being paid Saturday to the following Friday rather than Monday to Saturday. The abolition of Saturday "subbing" caused the coalheavers to refuse to turn up on the Saturday and the port began to stop again.[7] Alderman Harford met the men on Sunday and arranged for T.P. O'Connor to address a mass

1. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, March 1 1915. The Agreement was reached on February 22 1915.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Six shillings a week rise was a great deal for Liverpool dockers who often earned only 16s a week.
5. Liverpool Dail Post and Mercury, March 1 1915.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.

meeting on Thursday in St Martins Halls. Before that meeting, the coalheavers found themselves increasingly isolated. Their first demand was for one shilling a day and no change in the working conditions.[1] By Wednesday they were arguing they were prepared to go back without the shilling as long as the 'subs' were retained and,

> "They wanted to go forth from that meeting to convince the employers that they were not unpatriotic and disloyal but were as loyal and patriotic as any body of men in His Majesty's kingdom."[2]

They were denounced by James Sexton, and the Civic Service League was prepared to act as "volunteer coalers."[3] 1,500 coalheavers turned up to the St Martins Halls for the Thursday mass meeting, chaired by Austin Harford. O'Connor put the case for the resumption of work:

> "One governing principle which should guide all their their thoughts and resolves was the war. From its first hour he had realised that unless they won in this great struggle democracy and the rights of the workers would receive a blow from which they would not soon recover."[4]

He refuted the suggestion that the men wanted the "subs" to buy drink rather than midday food, and repudiated the suggestion that the coal-heavers were neither patriotic nor interested in the war:

> "He thought it ought to be remembered that there were few of them who had not a brother or son fighting in the trenches for the cause of the nation (Applause)"[5]

1. Ibid.
2. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, March 4 1915, reported a meeting of 300-400 coalheavers in St Martins Hall. The coalheavers were considered one of the most exclusively Catholic trades of the North-End docks.
3. Ibid. "A good proportion of the volunteers emanated from various Corporation departments, and comprised draughtsmen, clerks, and others whose usual occupation is sedentary." They weren't used because resumption of work was expected. (T.P. O'Connor had arrived in Liverpool and had met with the shipowners.) It was doubtful how much use they would have been and a greater threat was that 162 naval coalers were being sent from London, Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, March 5 1915.
4. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, March 5 1914.
5. Ibid.

He added that the dispute was between workmen and workmen for it was their own union representatives who had made the agreement, and as the coalheavers worked under different conditions from the dockers it might be as well to consider their having some better representation of their views. Then he made his appeal to their loyalty:

> "I cannot take responsibility of encouraging any movement among any body of our fellow-citizens which will weaken the arms of our Army in this difficult hour of struggle and of trial. If there be any race in the world which I would more lament taking any such course it is my own race. I beg of you as a section of my countrymen to view this struggle in which you are to-day not from a narrow but a broad point of view, not from the interests of an individual or a class but the supreme interests of our country and Empire now in danger. I ask you to go back to your work immediately, holding to your principles, determined to fight for them at the proper hour and with favourable and proper conditions. Meantime, however, let nobody say that in the hour of struggle the coal-heavers of Liverpool lent assistance to the army of the enemy against the Army of England (applause)"[1]

Several speakers opposed the resumption but Harford then made a further appeal saying "the failure of the meeting would be a triumph for the enemy" and the resolution was passed unanimously[2].

The Catholic community was at the centre of this dispute but with no independent Labour organisation within that community, the position put forward by the leadership of the UIL in Liverpool won. Ultimately the reaction against the British 'patriotism' of the UIL leadership led to growing support for the underground Sinn Fein organisation in Liverpool[3].

1. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, March 5 1915.
2. Ibid. The following day T.P. O'Connor said that his observations had been listened to "respectfully but coldly" and it was only after some coalheavers and Harford had spoken that it was carried, Ibid, March 6 1915.
3. In Glasgow by contrast it was always possible for the Irish to join the Catholic Socialist Society.

It was, however, not only Catholic workers who struck. Although the carters had settled their union still struck two firms which were at the heart of the Conservative Working Men's Association in Liverpool: Robert Cain lent its vehicles (300 plus) to the Conservative cause every election and the managing director of Bent's was Alderman Salvidge[1]. Both firms refused to negotiate with the union but agreed to discuss the increase in rates after resumption of work with deputations of their own workmen[2]. It was, though, a measure of dissatisfaction and of discontent within the Protestant camp that they were struck at all.

While the strikes and strike threats had led to local and national agreements for the dockers, carters and railwaymen and other workers[3], they did not stop there. The Birkenhead dockers, without the interventions of Harford and O'Connor continued to refuse to work overtime or Saturdays as did some of the Liverpool dockers. Their weekend strike lasted for over a month and continued despite Lord Kitchener's visit[5] to Liverpool and impassioned appeals from

1. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, March 3 1915.
2. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, March 5 1915.
3. The Corporation increased wages of employees and of the police Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, March 2 1915, March 11 1915 and other groups of workers had struck successfully such as the moulders who worked on ship repairing. See, Socialist, March 1915.
4. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, March 22 1915.
5. Lord Kitchener was asked to come to Liverpool by Lord Derby and Sexton's report of his meeting with him was as follows "He talked to me just like a father" and he said "I believe in organisation and I want to see the working men's organisation kept up, but there is a limit... You can tell these men I say that any British workmen who does his duty now will be strongly protected against any injustice from his employer", see Ibid, March 23 1915.

Sexton[1], and Father Vaughan[2]. The remaining Liverpool strikers responded to Kitchener's appeal, but the Birkenhead dockers stayed out. They further increased their demands on April 1 1915 when they decided to treat the Thursday before Good Friday as a Saturday in terms of overtime payments. One thousand marched out demanding an extra one shilling for one shift and another shilling for another shift[3]. When other Birkenhead dockers refused to join them they returned to work, but that evening the NUDL Executive Committee threatened to suspend the entire branch of 2,000 members if all the Birkenhead dockers did not resume working Saturdays[4]. The Birkenhead branch defied their Executive[5] and for several weeks maintained their actions with some

1. At a meeting in support of Union Jack Day the following Saturday Sexton said
"You have seen today some of the finest soldiers of Liverpool reviewed by the greatest soldier in the world, who has in firm hands the destiny of the Empire. And I think in his hands it is absolutely safe.
I did not believe in a big army. I did not believe in a big navy. I confess now that had it not been for our navy Oxford would have been another Louvain and Liverpool another Antwerp. Our industrial machine must go on. The men who shirks his job or who refuses to put in all he knows on his work is playing the game of the Kaiser. The great soldier now in charge of our armies told us trade union leaders last week that he would see no injustice could be done to any British workmen so long as he did his duty". Ibid, March 22 1915.

2. Ibid. Father Vaughan was a famous Jesuit preacher who, in Liverpool told a meeting of 2,000 at St Francis Xavier's Church "I pray for Kitchener every day".

3. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, Friday April 2 1915: "The men know there is a shortage of labour and are taking advantage of the situation in spite of the appeals to their patriotism".

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid, April 5 1915.

support from the employers[1] before conceding defeat.

The dock strike had two immediate consequences: firstly, an anti-drink agitation similar to one mounted in Glasgow except that in Liverpool it involved a conference of both Protestant clergymen and Roman Catholics[2]. At the end of March the ten o'clock closing rule was introduced. Secondly, the strike led to the creation of a Docker's Battalion under the command of Lord Derby.

Derby announced his plan for the Docker's Battalion of three companies of 375 dockers and officers initially on the night the NUDL warned the Birkenhead dockers to return to work or face suspension. The scheme was to enrol trade union dockers into the battalion which was under military discipline but was paid the rates of the White Book (5 shillings a week), army pay (7 shillings a week) and normal overtime rates. Williams, chief of the Labour Exchange was to be the Captain, Sexton an unofficial advisor and three of Sexton's 'lieutenants' - Keefe, President of the Dockers' Unions, McKibbon, Vice-President, and O'Hare - were to be the Sergeants in charge of

1. Brocklebank wrote to Booth and to Lord Derby saying that he, the Clan Line, Biddy and Booths were all prepared to be expelled from the Association because the trouble was much more complicated than merely a question of wages. "Birkenhead's position as a hopeless and helpless minority in the Joint Committee has done more to convert me to Home Rule for Ireland." The letter argued it was part of the bargain of the 1912 clearing house agreement that men should keep the sub. See, 17th Earl of Derby, Papers, Picton Library.

2. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, March 13 1915. The Bishop of Liverpool was among those who met the Roman Catholic leaders (among them was C.F. Harford, Austin's brother), praised Lloyd George's recent speech and demanded a 'Cromwell' to take care of the evil of drink so that the war could be won.

of the Companies. So involved was the trade union leadership in the scheme that many dockers attempted to apply at the union branches[1].

The Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury commented:

> "The scheme was not devised specially to meet the Birkenhead dock trouble... but nothing is more certain that there will be no hesitation in using the corps wherever Government work is wilfully held up"[2].

Moreover the whole scheme was clearly a test case

1. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, April 1, 2 1915 See also 17th Earl of Derby, op cit. A conference had been held at the War Office between Major General Sir John Cowans (Quartermaster-General), Sir H. Llewellyn Smith, Secretary Board of Trade, Sir George Askwith (Chief Industrial Commissioner) Brigadier General A.R.Stuart Wortley (Director of Movement), at which Llewellyn Smith put forward rates suggested by both Lawrence Holt and Alfred Booth. It was Holt's suggested rates that became the basis (they were higher than Derby's and lower than Booth's). At the Conference Se ton said that there would be no difficulty with the Stevedores and Derby said it would be possible to keep discipline by fining as was done by the Unions already. Askwith said that Liverpool had "unique advantages" for starting a scheme like this; the influence of Derby and Sexton, the best dockers in the Kingdom and the Standing Joint Committee and the Clearing House. A conference had then been held in Liverpool on March 9th between the leaders of the Ship-owners (Colonel Concannon, Lawrence Holt, A.A. Booth, Hughes) and Williams and Sexton, McGrath, McKibbon and O'Keefe.

and Derby argued that whereas only one Battalion was being raised to begin with it was a scheme that could embrace 40,000 men. All the men would receive the medal Kitchener had promised the workers in the arms factories and the battalion would be called the First Dock Battalion Liverpool Regiment.[1] Colonel Concannon, speaking on behalf of the Liverpool Shipowners was quite explicit. Having thanked Lord Derby for his interest in the Port of Liverpool's 'congestion and labour' problem he added:

> "It was very hard to say what was Government work and what was not. The whole congestion of the port affected the Government, and so when this battalion was not needed for Government work it would be turned on to other work in the national interests. Reference had been made to the corps not being a strike-breaking corps. That was meant in the strict sense of the term, but it would be used if there was a slackness in doing the work - where the ordinary dockers would not or could not do the work. Both as an ex-commanding officer and a shipping manager he thought the scheme was as perfect as it was possible for it to be."[2]

Two groups were doubtful about the scheme's perfection; the stevedores and the dockers themselves. It soon became clear that Sexton's confidence that the stevedores would be happy with the scheme was misplaced.[3] On April 16 1915 the Employers' Association

1. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, April 1 1915. The General Manager of the Cardiff Railway Company, wrote to Lord Derby saying as that too many of his men were enlisting could he start a battalion as well.

2. Ibid. Derby was sent a telegram from the War Office giving him control of the Army Service Corps on April 19 1915, who had been backing up the stevedores (and who wanted the union out and the entire Liverpool dockers in uniform eventually), and the power to requisition the gear of the stevedores and porters if necessary.

3. At a conference on April 12 it was alleged that not only were the stevedores not happy with the scheme but that union officials had too much control over it and had admitted that their object was to oust the stevedores. "Conference on Dockers Battalion", April 12 1915 in 17th Earl of Derby, op cit.

of the Port of Liverpool met with the Master Stevedores and Master Porters to hear their grievances, and then passed a resolution that military control of dockers should be limited to one battalion which should be disbanded at the end of the war.[1]

The other revolt was of the dockers. It was made absolutely clear that the scheme would not be put to a ballot of the dockers[2] and that although the battalion would not be a strike-breaking battalion it would only respect official strikes. Lord Derby said:

> "I don't look upon it in any way as a strike breaking battalion if these men are used to do: the work of men who are fighting their own superior officials and by so doing are possibly delaying goods for the front. In other words, what I shall do is never to go against the authority of the trade union officials and executive, who are your own choice."[3]

It was hoped that the scheme was the beginning of industrial military discipline, and the press, therefore, reported none of its troubles. In fact some dockers refused to work alongside their 'Khaki' bretheren and a mass meeting of all the dockers was called at which, although Derby, was listened to, Sexton and his officials wern't.[4] The President of Liverpool LRC summarised the results of the mass meetingas a victory:

1. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, April 17 1915; Conference April 16 1915 headed, "Employers' Association of the Port of Liverpool".

2. Ibid,April 19 1915.

3. Ibid.

4. Forward,May 8 1915. "The Sexton-Derby-Dockers Business Burst" by Rev. Herbert Dunnico, President Liverpool LRC.

"...the dockers are now given to understand that while the scheme is not going to be dropped, there will be no extension of it. Moreover, they have been assured that the khaki brigade will be used exclusively for Government work, and that, in future, it will not be broken up into sections and sent to work alongside civilian dockers.

"I congratulate the Liverpool Dockers upon having won a great victory, not only for themselves, but for the other workers, for had the scheme been successful with the dockers, other workers would have soon found themselves within its clutches."[1]

The Dockers' Battalion scheme was contained at this point in time; even in 1917 the number of dockers enrolled only reached 1,400 to 1,500. But the dockers' struggles in 1915 did not lead to the establishment of a rank and file organisation. Instead, Liverpool's 'patriotic' dockers faced a contradiction between their determination to preserve their working conditions (which led to conflict with their own union officials over unofficial action and the deployment of the Dockers' Battalion) and their beliefs. In May 1915 both the North End and the South End were engulfed in an anti-German riot.

The 'Lusitania' was a passenger ship and when it was torpedoed on its way from America to Liverpool[2] with a large number of Liverpool crewmen on board, an anti-German riot swept the city. In many ways this riot was more terrible than previous Liverpool riots, whether between Protestants and Catholics or workers and the police. This time the targets were

1. Forward, May 8 1915.
2. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, May 10 1915. The German Government had actually warned passengers through advertisements that the liners would be attacked and in America although the incident was used in a pro-war campaign, the question was asked why the 'Lusitania' wasn't given a naval escort. There were 2,160 people on board; 462 passangers and 302 crew were saved.

any shops selling pork, or any person suspected of being a German alien - and these individuals had no'community'to protect them. The riot began on Saturday night and Sunday, May 8 and 9 1915, in the North-End:

> "The deep feeling of resentment aroused by the sinking of the Lusitania was marked in Liverpool on Saturday night, and again yesterday, by the almost unrestrained wrecking and looting of German shops in the city. In the North-end, where seafaring men mostly reside, the outbreak of hostility towards German residents and shopkeepers was so determined that the police were for a time powerless to check the depredations of indignant people. Pork butchers' shops were wrecked systematically from Mile End to Rice-lane, a distance of two miles, and it was evident that the attack was premeditated. It took the police by surprise and great damage was done before they were able to stem the tide of destruction.
>
> About 60 arrests were made in the course of the raid and of the persons taken in charge a large percentage were afterwards released on bail. There is no record of anybody being seriously injured. It is computed that altogether 30 shops were raided."[1]

Judging from the names of those arrested the initial mob appeared to have been Protestant,[2] although more isolated attacks also took place in the Scotland Road that night.[3] On Monday the riot spread to the city centre where any shop with a foreign name was attacked, as was any trademan suspected of being a German or marrying a German, or to have done something at some time of his life to have aroused the suspicions of the inflammable mob.[4]

1. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, May 10 1915.

2. Those named in the newspaper report were Martin Timpson, John Harris, Albert Edward Bedford, Lily Colling, Albert Rowlands, Saumuel Haddock, George Ager. Ibid, May 11 1915.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

The riot continued in the North End. A crowd of 2,000 gathered to march to the Mill Street area (Toxteth) and to make a round of the South-End, but police guarded the Lodge and Sithdown Road areas to prevent it passing. Rioting and looting, however, began nonetheless and swept Toxteth.[1]

On the Monday it was noticeable that the riot had spread into the areas where Labour support existed such as Edge Hill and Kensington, Bootle, and the working class areas of Birkenhead. The worst riots that day were in fact in Lodge Lane conducted chiefly by a crowd of women.[2] The crowd that assembled at Edge Hill, Earle Road, was:

> "... mostly of women whose menfolk had perished in the Lusitania"[3]

It also swept through the Brownlow Hill area. By Tuesday the riots at the North-End had died down but rioting continued in the South-End (Toxteth) and the Lodge Lane district and the districts of Kensington and Paddington and Garston and Birkenhead.[4] The anti-German riots throughout the four days had thus been largely centred in Protestant districts and in those districts which had been seen by the Labour movement in Liverpool as their centre - Kensington and the Railwaymen's wards.[5]

1. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, May 11 1915.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid, May 12 1915.

5. Bootle and Birkenhead had always had more advanced labour movements than Liverpool.

The City Magistrates dealt leniently with those arrested but warned of harsher penalties in the future and exhorted the rioters to realise that the damage they were doing would be paid for out of the rates and that it was not harming Germany[1]: All licensed premises were closed from 6p.m. and the police interned 'for their own safety' all Germans and Austrians who had been allowed to remain at liberty under guarantee from 'good and trustworthy citizens'. The police also warned some naturalised British subjects of German and Austrain extraction to 'leave their districts'.[2] The cost of the riots reached £50,000, the policy of leniency was abandoned,[3] and the rioters were urged to boycott the shops rather than sack them.[4]

From Liverpool, anti-German riots spread elsewhere in Britain and overseas[5], but none equalled Liverpool's ferocity. They had their origin in the total contradiction of the war for the Liverpool Protestants. The Liverpool Catholics were fighting for a positive cause, Irish Home Rule and Catholic Emancipation, while the Protestant Cause was largely negative. Thus in the mid-1915, Wise admitted:

1. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, May 11 1915
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid. May 13 1915
4. Ibid. May 12 1915
5. Ibid. May 13 1915. Riots took place in S. Africa and Melbourne, Australia.

> "Our battleground, St. Domingo Pit, is not doing so well".[1]

And, against the priests' argument that Germany was the home of the Reformation, Wise could only reply in the most Jesuitical manner himself.[2] George Wise's Protestant Reformation Church displayed enormous contradictions. In February 1915 Lord Derby presented the prizes at Wise's Church's bi-annual book distribution, and 410 men were already 'in the Colours'[3]. But because of the rumours that George Wise was a German, even the refusal of the Irish Nationalist party to join the reorganised war Cabinet in May 1915[4] could not revitalise the St. Domingo's Pit meetings. At a meeting in the Sun Hall, Kensington at the beginning of June, Wise was forced to produce his birth certificate and his parents' marriage certificate.[5]

On June 6 1915, Lloyd George visited the Liverpool Dockers Battalion and a meeting was held addressed by Lord Derby, James Sexton and Lloyd George - an impossible combination a year previously.[6]

1. Henderson, op cit, p.24 passim.

2. Ibid , "The action of the Roman Catholic Party in the Reichstag in prosecuting Germany's hideous and barbarous policy of frightfulness has had its counterpart in the sustained and growing silence of the Pope in the presence of unspeakable outrages and offences against the first principles of humanity".

3. Ibid , p.21.

4. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, May 26 1915. The decision appears to have been related to the collapse of the UIL organisation over the previous months, "We appeal to local leaders in every constituency in Ireland to at once get to work to reorganise the United Irish League in every parish where it is not in active operation.".

5. Henderson, op cit, p.23 passim. The meeting was on June 2 1915.

6. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, June 6 1915.

The patriotism of the Liverpool dockers - especially those of the South-End - made the Dockers Battalion possible. But throughout the rest of the war the role of that Battalion was always limited by the preparedness of the rest of the dock labour force to strike to retain 'their' work.

In 1917 the dockers supporting Sexton and Milligan in their support of conscription[1] didn't oppose in principle the formation of a second Dockers Battalion, nor in principle the use of 'mobile battalions' which were essentially Army Service Corps units used on Government work along the docks. The Liverpool Daily Post thought that while there was objection to the mobile battalions there would be no objection to a second dockers battalion:

> "Only those who were experienced Dockers and members of the Dockers' Union were taken. As in the case of the first battalion, which is 1,400 strong, the men will be required to work only on Government ships. They will be classed as soldiers and be under military discipline when at work but at full civilian pay, and when their work is concluded they will have full civilian rights.
>
> The formation of the new battalion is not unpopular along the line of docks but there has been much discontent with the mobile battalions of dockers. There is a feeling amongst the dockers that the mobile battalions are doing the civilian dockers out of a job. Mr Sexton has recently waited on the Government authority and they have promised him that the dockers' grievance will be immediately remedied."[2]

In fact, although there was an objection to the mobile battalions - the Birkenhead branch of the NUDL passed a resolution in the week ending December 5 1917, that they would refuse to do work in future with the mobile battalions but would only work with the

1. See below p.546.
2. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, March 22 1917.

dock battalions.[1] It also struck work when the Dock Battalion was used on non-Government work on loading the 'Mongolia'.[2]

1. Confidential report on the work of 1st and 2nd Dock Battalions K.L.R. (The 'King's' (Liverpool) Regiment) dated 5 December 1917 Seventeenth Earl of Derby's papers op cit.

2. Ibid.

Tory Democracy, trade unionism and the split in the Liverpool labour movement

The dockers' struggle to restrict the 'Dockers Battalion' to government war work was not isolated. Despite the Irish Nationalists leaders' support of the war and the number of Irish Catholics who had enrolled[1], and despite the pro-war junketings of the dockers themselves,[2] the dockers struck work throughout the war in defence of their interests and against their official leaders.

In March 1916 the attempt to introduce women workers onto the docks met with a decisive rebuff. When fifty women were employed in trucking cotton on the North Docks the Executive of the NUDL announced:

> "The dockers executive are opposed to any extension of women's labour, on the grounds:
> (1) That thework is entirely unfit for women
> (2) That the employment of women endangers the life and limbs of ordinary dockers and
> (3) The docks make it highly undesirable, both on health and moral considerations, thatwomen should be employed."[3]

Lord Derby argued that he had seen women dockers in Antwerp and that

1. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, March 18 1916, reports the King presenting John Redmond with a shamrock when he inspected the Irish Guards. Ibid , March 21 1916, published Austin Harford's estimate of the number of Irish Catholic volunteers who were fighting. Having asked the priests of 14 parishes he calculated there were at least 1000 men of each Parlish enlisted and therefore, with 42 parishes, Liverpool Catholics had sent up to 50,000 men to the front.

2. Ibid , October 15 1917. Members of No 5. Branch of the NUDL made a presentation of £200 (+£50 from Lord Derby) to the Private Ratcliffe who had won the VC. He was "escorted through the Liverpool streets by his co-members of the No 5 branch of the Dockers Union, the procession being headed by mounted police and a band of music, and hero drawn in an open carriage by his docker friends and greeted en route by popular oration." Derby, Sexton, Milligan and Sir Alfred Booth were all present and when Derby said "we are all Englishmen", a voice added "and Irishmen".

3. Ibid, March 13 1916.

such work was:

> "within a robust women's physical capcity. Especially is this the case in the business of trucking. The Belgian women are adept in this respect"[1]

Although the women were to be restricted to porterage work and trucking work inside the warhouses to allow time for the objections to disappear[2], the dockers' strike action settled the dilution question for the rest of the war.[3]

Later in March 1916, the Transport Workers Federation issued a manifesto with its wage demands. The carters had received an immediate wage rise after threatening strike action:

> "No one could accuse the working carter of want of patriotism; their union had sent over 2,000 men to the colours. They wished to avoid a strike in time of war but they insisted on an all-round settlement."[4]

The dockers who had had a wage claim in for six months and were still waiting for the results of an arbitration award from Askwith were incensed by this. 10,000 dockers at the North-End went on unofficial strike although they were told that the award was in the post.[5] When the award came it was for one penny an hour rather than the

1. Ibid, March 6 1916. It added: "Liverpool with its big lower class population has plenty of women who possibly are ready and suitable for dock labour and they are those who are quite unfit for jobs of any more superior description." Derby was arguing for much more than trucking however. Derby was arguing that no single men under 30 should be in the reserved category at all and that in a gang of 50 dockers only 6 or 7 need be skilled.

2. Ibid., March 14, 15 1916.

3. Ibid., March 22 1916.

4. Ibid.,March 27 1916. The carters had demanded 2s. a week increase on top of their 1915 settlement and were threatening to strike if the master builders didn't pay.

5. Ibid ,March 30 1916.

twopence they had demanded, and they stayed out.[1]

The 1916 strike was confined to the North-End. Neither the South-End docks nor the 'Khaki' dockers engaged on war work struck.[2] The following day the union officials got 2,000 of the men back to work and then another 5,000 on the promise that the award would be sent back to arbitration.[3] The major demand at issue besides the twopence was overtime rates to be in line with increases of daytime rates - and they finally got another shilling a night.[4]

In 1917 and 1918 the dockers were given pay awards that revolutionised wage rates in Liverpool. In 1917 there were two awards that together meant that the pre-war White Book rates had been increased by four pence an hour, or four shillings a day - and Sunday working was to be paid at double the rate.[5] In December the Liverpool Dock Board raised their charges by 50 per cent and blamed the constant wage demands of the dockers.[6] But a new system was introduced in which dockers' wages had to be reviewed every four months and the

1. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, March 31 1916.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., April 1 1916.
4. Ibid , April 3 1916.
5. Ibid , September 1 1917.
6. Ibid , December 21 1917, Sir Helenus R. Robertus, Chairman of the Liverpool Dock Board said:
   "This constant increase in wages cannot go on without having serious consequences for the country, and it is urgently incumbent upon those in authority to make some attempt to put an end to the ever-increasing demands."

first award in this scheme was made in May 1918. The 7s.6d. a week advance of May 1918 brought the dockers' wages to a total extra payment of 27s 6d. a week.[1] The new system did not solve the problem of unofficial strikes but it did isolate those sections of the dockers who felt particularly aggrieved. In August, foremen, timekeepers and clerks in some firms 'in the coasting trade' stopped work.[2] In September 1918 the coalheavers began unofficial action by stopping work at 5pm and refusing overtime.[3] They were demanding rises of 150 per cent on the pre-war rates and a shortening of hours for night work and for the half night.[4] Sexton argued the dispute was sectional and the NUDL Executive refused to support it (saying they couldn't under DORA) but suggested that the claim should be put within the national claim.[5] When it was refused again the coalheavers struck again and only returned to work when the Government sent in naval ratings to move the coal.[5]

Among the Liverpool dockers it was the North-End dockers and coalheavers (both groups predominantly Catholic) who had been prepared to fight for higher wages. But the same was also true of the Protestant carters. Whereas in 1916, the dockers had compared themselves with the carters, in 1917 and 1918 the comparison was the other way round. In November 1917 the carters complained that dockers were being paid more than them, although carters worked longer hours for their rates

1. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, May 6 1918. Porters were increased from 8s 6d. a day to 10s. and from 9s. to 10s 6d.

2. Ibid , August 5 1918.

3. Ibid , September 11 1918. They were told that their case would only be heard when they returned to work. ibid. September 14 1918, 1,600 attended a meeting in St Martins Halls and agreed to return to work for one week and to come out if no settlement was reached,

4. Ibid , September 16 1918.

5. Ibid , September 23, 24, 25, 26 1918.

and there was a shortage of carters.[1] They got a rise of six shillings a week for top grades[2]. But in June 1918 the Carters put in another demand for rises of 12s. a week for senior carters and 6s. a week for teamsmen and one horse men. They argued that the dockers now had wages of £3.9s. and that even with this increase they would still be lower than the dockers.[3]

The wage 'leap-frogging' that took place between the carters and the dockers during the war revealed the difference between the 'Tory Democracy' of Liverpool and theideology of Modern Conservatism. Tory Democracy was an ideology based on a negotiated agreement between different social orders or social classes; it was a different ideology from that of Modern Conservatism which was being constructed during the war. Modern Conservatism emphasised the individual and the nation, and individual self-sacrifice for the nation. It had none of the elements of pluralism of Tory Democracy[4].

Other groups of Liverpool workers like the railwaymen and the shipbuilding and engineering workers, did not have the strike record of the dockers and carters despite having active rank and file groups - particularly on the railways where the Liverpool Vigilance

1. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, November 3 1917. The wage rates quoted by the carters were not strictly accurate for the dockers. The dockers in November 1917 were not receiving nine or ten shilling a day for nine hours, but their 8s 6d. and 9 shillings was more than the carters' 7s 6d. and 7s 10d. for 10 hours work including stable duty at the evenings and weekends.

2. Ibid , November 27 1917. The increase was for the teamsmen and brought them up to 53s. a week, one horse men received 58s., motor men 58s., second men 52s. and trailer men 48s.

3. Ibid , June 5 1918.

4. At the dockers' VC presentation Milligan said that 'all social grades' could rejoice in his achievement. Lord Derby's reply was "I hope that we have tonight no social grades". But Liverpool Tory Democracy didn't believe that, see ibid, Ocotber 15 1917.

Committee was active from April 1915[1], after the dockers' strikes.

In 1916 it declared that if the Government did not stop price rises then they would reserve:

> "the right to take such action as we may deem necessary to conserve our livelihood".2

It led a movement for higher wages in the summer of 1916[3] and in 1917 attempted to develop a national unofficial movement. It was the Liverpool Vigilance Committee which took the initiative of calling a National Conference of District and Vigilance Committees in January 1917.[4]

In September 1917 the Liverpool and Birkenhead rank and file railwaymen unanimously supported the demand of the London rank and file conference for an increase of £1 a week. Harry Watson, Vic-Chairman of the Liverpool Vigilance Committee presided and said:

> "Working class liberties had been taken away, their very life had been conscripted and where there was no mercy in life there should be none in regard to riches and wealth".[5]

1. P. S. Bagwell, The Railwaymen', (1963) p.349 claims that the Liverpool Vigilance committee was active from April 1915 onward. The question of dilution did not arise as the unions did not accept it, Liverpool DP&M,April 9 1918.

2. B. Pribicevic. The Demand for Workers' Control in the Railways Coalming and Engineering Industries, 1910-1922 D. Phil. (Oxford 1957)

3. Bagwell, op cit, p.350; Liverpool called for the termination of the agreement and demanded a 10s. increase. The railwaymen were given 5s.

4. Pribicevic, op cit, p.89. There were 42 delegates at Nottingham in January 1917. C. J. Edwards of Liverpool and W. J. Abraham of Sheffield were prominent but officers were only elected for the duration of the conference. Other conferences were held in 1917 and 1918 and a special committee appointed.

5. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, September 24 1917.

The demand for a £1 a week rise for all grades of railwaymen on top of the consolidation of the 15 shillings a week war bonus[1] and for equal pay for the women. When the Liverpool and Birkenhead men adopted a 'show gear' policy in November 1917 during protracted official negotiations however, they were isolated and management refused to resume negotiations until they had returned to normal working.[2] Liverpool then took the lead in setting up Station Committees in their district:

> "The purpose of these committees is to deal with grievances on the spot, to look after the members and to assist in the general scheme of organisation."[3]

Despite the failure of their unofficial action to spread, the Liverpool Station committees remained in existence.[4]

In September 1918 the South Wales railwaymen struck, and it began to spread to London and the North West but was largely confined to the locomotive men.[5] In Liverpool, although the ASLEF men decided

1. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, September 24 1917. By this time of course the dockers' wages had been increased by 4s. a day in Liverpool. See above.

2. Bagwell, op cit, p.354 Negotiations began in September. See also Liverpool Daily Post, November 24, 26 1917 for report of NUR Conference at Leicester. The NUR Executive were claiming an extra 10s. a week, but the companies were only offering 5s to over-18 year olds, 2s.6d. to under-18s. The NUR Conference met at Leicester from November 24-26th, but a motion of disapproval of Vigilance Committees and District Committees was lost. Bagwell, ibid. See The Times, November 28, 29 1917 for 'show gear' policy.

3. Railway Review, November 16 1917, quoted in Pribicevic, op cit, p.94.

4. Pribicevic, op cit. A conference of 18 stations committees met in June 1918. Bagwell, op cit, p.355 says the Liverpool Vigilante Committee called a pre-NUR conference of 20 'progressive' delegates in the NUR, 1918.

5. Bagwell, op cit, p.355-56.

to come out and did so on the day that the South Wales men decided to return, the NUR decided against strike action in order not to prejudice the 'glorious victory' that was coming.[1]

The station committees only lasted for the duration of the war and appear to have been influenced by the development of shop stewards committees in engineering and allied industry.[2]

Certainly by November 1917, there was already a Merseyside Workers' Committee in existence whose formation owed much to the fact that four of the Clyde deportees settled in Liverpool.[3] From the outbreak of the war there had been a large growth in shipbuilding and munitions works in Liverpool in what had previously been largely a ship-repairing centre. It was difficult for the Merseyside Workers Council to achieve anything in Liverpool. The question of dilution had been settled amicably in April 1916 at a Trade Union conference of the Federation of Engineering and Shipbuilding Trades and the National Advisory Committee on War Output. John Hill presided and welcomed the Dilution Commissioners, offered them all the assistance possible and arranged for meetings to be organised throughout the yards and workshops. He added that men who were 'disloyal' to their unions by not joining their union during the war would have their names given to the Ministry of Munitions.[4]

1. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, September 24, 25,26, 1918.

2. Pribicevic, op cit, p.94.

3. Forward, June 10 1916, reported that McManus, Messer, Shields and Wainwright, had gone to Liverpool. They also established a branch of the SLP, but that does not appear to have had a major impact either. Subscriptions received by the Socialist, in 1918 for machinery fund showed only a minimal Liverpool presence.

4. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, April 17 1916.

The Liverpool movement was split on the question of conscription - not united as in Glasgow.[1] Activity against individual prosecutions of workers was made difficult by the atmosphere that prevailed in some Liverpool firms.[2]

The strange paradox of the Liverpool Labour movement where pro-war workers without rank and file movements could strike during the war, while unions with rank and file movements and opposed to the war could not,[3] can only be explained by Tory Democracy.

The strength of Tory Democracy in Liverpool can be seen in the support for Sexton during his battle with Liverpool Trades Council over the question of conscription. On this question the Liverpool movement split.

1. See above, P. 483.

2. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, April 17 1916 attacked the 'conchies' (i.e. conscientious objectors) of one factory claiming that strikes against them had been prevented on at least three occasioons and they should be removed. In October 1917 Cynthia Maguire the local organiser of the W.S.P.U. began holding anti-pacifist meetings at workgates.

3. Despite branches of the B.W.I.U. in Liverpool see Postgate, The Builders History, p.430, even the activity of the Building Trades was limited. There was a strike of all building workers except plumbers and painters. May 2 1918 Liverpool DP & M.

Conscription and the split in the Liverpool Labour Movement

In Liverpool 21 labour representatives went on to the local committee[1] of the'Prince of Wales Relief Fund' at the outbreak of the war, and the Liverpool Labour Movement also created a Workers' Vigilance Committee. Whereas in Glasgow the establishment of local workers' Vigilante Committees was a simple matter based on the ILP network of organisations, in Liverpool the establishment of a workers' Vigilance Committee was formed by representatives of the fragmented Liverpool labour movement, of the Transport Workers Federation, the Builders Trades Federation, the Shipping and Engineering Federation, the Co-operative Society, the Women's Trade Union Federation, the Liverpool LRC and the Liverpool Trades Council.[2] However, the Workers' Vigilance Committee's attempt to launch a campaign on price rises was abortive, and its subsequent attempt to launch a campaign on conscription led to a split with the dockers which developed into a split within the whole Liverpool Labour movement.

In 1915 both the Workers' Vigilance Committee and the Liverpool ILP declared against conscription; the Workers' Vigilance Committee described it as a

> "violation of the principles of civic freedom hitherto prized as one of the chief heritages of British Liberty."[3]

The opposition on the Liverpool Trades Council was more circumspect however and they, like the Birmingham Trades Council, supported the

1. A. Clinton, "The Trade Union rank and file: trade councils 1900 - 1940" (Manchester 1977), p.54-60.

2. S. Maddock, op cit, p.181-183.

3. S. Maddock, op cit, p.183.

Derby'attestation' recruitment scheme which was designed to get all unmarried men to enlist without conscription.[1]

When conscription was first announced Henderson spoke against it at a meeting in the Central Hall, London and it appeared that the entire Labour movement would oppose it. Believing this, the Trades Council and LRC, allied with the Birkenhead Trades Council, the Transport Workers Federation and the Building Trades Federation, held a 'protest against Conscription meeting' on January 23 1916. The Stadium meeting was successful with 2,000 in attendance and it pledged to continue the fight against conscription.[2] But when a delegation from the Trades Council and the LRC went to London they found the position of the national Labour movement had changed. The Labour Party Conference refused to continue the campaign against conscription at the end of January, and the Parliamentary Committee of the TUC was also trying to avoid the issue.[3]

James Sexton had from the beginning of January supported the Conscription measures.[4] He accused the TUC of manipulating the vote when it recommended the Parliamentary Labour Party to oppose the Military Service Bill on January 6 1916. He therefore condemned the Liverpool 'Protest Against Conscription' meeting in the press two days before it took place. He opposed the official ammendment from the Labour Group on the Council against Conscription and ridiculed

1. S. Maddock, op cit, p.185. See A. Clinton, op cit, p.62-64 for national attitude including Birmingham Trades Council.

2. Ibid , p.186-187, Clinton, op cit, p.65.

3. Clinton, ibid.

4. Sexton was extremly pro-war. In March 1916 a new play he had written called 'The Boys of the Old Brigade' was put on in Liverpool and dealt with a German espionage system being introduced into a British trade union. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury March 13, 1916, commented: "The central point is the efforts of the enemy to hamper the sending of supplies to the front. Mr Sexton claims that the play is based largely on fact." Previously Sexton had written a play called, 'The Riot Act' which dealt with subversion and the 1911 Transport Strike.

the Labour organisations while doing so.[1] All these actions came to a head when on February 16, Sexton accepted a place on the Military Service Tribunal, despite the official LRC list of names for such places having been defeated on the Council.[2]

The following Sunday the Trades Council Executive, the Labour Group,. and the LRC met with Sexton present. Hoey presented a list of charges detailing his actions in January and February with regard to conscription. The meeting did not ask Sexton to withdraw from the Military Service Tribunal but agreed to write to the Secretary of Labour's Local Government Board about the events in the City Council, and argued that Sexton did not represent the majority of the working classes.[3]

The position taken by the LRC, was more extreme. It called for Sexton's resignation as labour councillor for St Anne's Ward and sent a copy of the resolution to the National Labour Party, the TUC, the Transport Workers Federation, the NUDL and the St Helens Trades Council.[4] The whole issue came to a head on the Trades Council at the Liverpool Trades Council's AGM in March 1916. Firstly John Shannon, Secretary of the Liverpool Trades Council for twenty-two years, resigned over the amendments being proposed to the Annual Report he had written.[5]

1. Liverpool Trades Council, Minutes, AGM meeting of March 8 1916 adjourned to March 22.

2. Ibid.

3. Maddock, op cit, p.216-226 for a summary of 'The Sexton Affair'.

4. Ibid , Sexton was prospective Parliamentary candidate for St Helens and won the seat in 1918.

5. Liverpool Trades Council, Minutes, March 8 1916. A paragraph censuring the conduct of three people at the Stadium meeting was voted in despite opposition. Nelson Taylor also got the word 'Hun' dropped and inserted instead 'nations in their thirst for power'.

Secondly, a resolution protesting at the introduction of Military Service No 2 Bill was carried. And, thirdly, the left wing forces on the Trades Council - essentially the LRC (led by Hoey) and the Railwaymen - united to condemn Sexton's behaviour.[1] The resolution moved repeated Hoey's list of Sexton's actions, stated that the Council represented 80 socie.ties and resented this unwarranted attack, and said Sexton had forfeited the confidence of the Liverpool labour movement:

> "We repudiate him as a public representative of Labour in any capacity whatever."[2]

It was moved by Lloyd of the NUR, and seconded by Richardson.

The debate revealed that the Liverpool Labour movement was irrevocably split between the leftwing LRC, supported by the railwaymen and some of the skilled trades, and the dockers' union.. Dunford, of the dockers, said that Sexton was bound to take the action he did because the NUDL supported conscription, and asked:

> "Are we to go back and tell the dockers you are against them because they are dockers."[3]

Robinson pointed out that no one was attempting to raise an anti-docker agitation but:

> "If we do not protest against this business we are committing a crime posterity will not thank us for."[4]

1. The four groups most determined to pursue the case were clearly the LRC, the Vigilance .Committee, the Low Hill Labour Club (letters were read from all these bodies) which was in a railwaymen's area, and the railwaymen. It was the NUR delegate who moved the resolution. Liverpool Trades Council, Minutes, op cit.

2. Liverpool Trades Council, Minutes, March 8 1916.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid, Hoey asked: "The question is, is Sexton going to do what he likes in Liverpool without control from the responsible bodies who represent labour."

George Naylor, one of the older, right wing members of the Trades Council attempted to oppose both groups:

> "I am not going to stand by what Sexton said in the City Council nor am I going to stand for Hoey's coming into this Council shaking his arms about like a windmill. I have a habit of thinking for myself. It seems to be a fight between Hoey and the Labour group under the dictation of the ILP"[1]

The motion was passed with 6 against and the NUDL withdrew. Sexton was not present at the AGM but his reply was printed in the Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury. He claimed that a trio, Robinson, Hoey and Lloyd were attacking him and manipulating the Trades Council. He also claimed that before the war there were two branches of the Labour movement in Liverpool - the Trades Council for industrial work and the LRC to deal with political work and which co-ordinated the ILP, Fabian Society and the BSP. During the war the Workers' Vigilance Committee had come into existence to deal with social and political matters arising out of the war and,

> "though not affiliated with any other body, claiming the right to re-coordinate the bodies affiliated to the LRC"[2]

Both Robinson and Hoey were on the Workers' Vigilance Committee. Robinson was also a member of the ILP, and Lloyd was a member of the BSP; all three were members of the Liverpool Trades Council and the LRC. Robinson, President of the WVC, had moved support of the January

1. Liverpool Trades Council, Minutes, March 8 1916.

2. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, March 28, 1916, reported that the NUDL Executive had already written saying:
"We endorse the action of Mr Sexton in protesting against the Workers' Vigilance Committee or any other mushroom body assuming to represent the transport workers of the city at the Stadium meeting"
Ibid, March 23 1916, stated it was the railwaymen who asked Liverpool Trades Council to repudiate Sexton. NUDL wrote in saying that Sexton's attitude to the war "endorsed by all Dockers Labourers on the Mersey". They added that the Stadium meeting was unnecessary as industrial conscription was not in the act.

Stadium meeting without prior notice and Sexton protested because the resolution didn't represent the feelings of the transport workers of the city. Sexton also opposed Hoey's policy on the Military Service Tribunals where he demanded that Labour should have half of the representatives, and where this was not granted, Labour councillors should obstruct the Tribunal's workings.[1]

At this point, Sexton and the dockers were isolated and could not form a seperate organisation. In June 1916, the Divisional Council of the NUR proposed a united demonstration on food and prices [2] at the Trades Council, and Tom Mann addressed the Council on a proposed Transport Workers Federation demonstration for the anniversary of 'Bloody Sunday' at the Stadium on August 13.[3] The meeting on August 13 was transformed into one on wartime distress.

During 1916, delegates to the Trades Council were extremely worried at the way both the Munitions Act and the Military Service exemption scheme were being applied, especially at Cammel Lairds,[4] and also worried about the case of two conscientious objectors.[5] There were however, also attempts during the first half of 1917 at a reconciliation, with the Trades Council Executives supporting

1. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, March 23 1916.
2. Liverpool Trades Council, Minutes, June 10 1916.
3. Ibid, July 12 1916.
4. Ibid, March 8 1916 and September 18 1916.
5. Ibid, September 18 1916.

Sexton while the LRC condemned him.[1]

In April Sexton resigned from the leadership of the Labour group in the City Council.

Milligan, now a delegate to the Trades Council, had an argument on the Trades Council as to whether they should attend a meeting arranged by the Lord Mayor for the King to meet Labour Representatives. Wilson said that they should have nothing to do with it, particularly in light of the Lord Mayor's insult to W. A. Robinson. Milligan said his own branch, NUDL 12, all agreed he should go.[2] It was agreed at a later Trades Council meeting that, like the LRC, they should have completely decided against participation, as Hoey "the most representative man in the city had not been invited"; it was said that the Secretary had made a tactical blunder.[3]

Then the Liverpool Trades Council, in association with the Transport Workers Federation, Shipbuilders and Engineering Federation, Building Trades Federation, the LRC, the ILP, the BSP the NUR and the Co-op arranged a demonstration in support of the Russian Revolution in Sheil Park. Watson raised the question of the Railway Vigilance Committee also being invited and they were. Each organisation was to have three speakers.[4] The denounciation by the dockers of the Sheil Park demonstration led to the demand that their affiliation to the Trades Council be cancelled; in the debate on the Trades Council, Dunford of the Dockers called the Railway Vigilance

1. Maddock, op cit, p.223-6.

2. Liverpool Trades Council Minutes, Special EC meeting May 13 1917 and minutes of the council meeting 13 June 1917.

3. Ibid.

4. Liverpool Traces Council, Minutes, EC Meeting 18 May 1917 adjourned Council Meeting 23 May 1917.

Committee a scab union. Dunford was suspended by 48 votes to 38 and the dockers left the meeting.[1] At the same meeting Hoey, Rose and Robinson reported lengthily on the Leeds Conference. Moreover on June 17 the Trades Council had called a special meeting to deal with Havelock Wilson and the Seamen and Firemen's unions action in not allowing MacDonald to visit Petrograd. Against the Sailors' and Firemen's union George Nelson moved an alternative resolution:

> "That this meeting of the Liverpool Trades Council, representing about 80,000 trade unionists believes that Germany stands condemned of murder in their submarine warfare, and extends its deepest sympathy to those so ruthlessly destroyed; yet it does not approve of the action of the Sailors' and Firemen's Union in its action in endeavouring to stifle free expression of opinion on the question of peace or war, and therefore refuses to endorse their action in the matter affecting Mr Ramsay MacDonald's visit to Petrograd especially in view of the fact that the Russian Government, the British Ambassador, the Right Hon Arthur Henderson, and the House of Commons all agree to the visit. This resolution to be sent to the Sailors and Firemen's Union and the Press.[2]

which was passed.

The National UDL, the NU of Seamen and Firemen, the Union of Ship Stewards, Cooks and Bakers then set up a breakaway Trades and Labour Council in alliance with Havelock Wilson. At the beginning of July Milligan wrote saying that the reason for their withdrawal from the council was that it was forced upon them by the 'Pacific' tendencies of the Liverpool Trades Council, deriving from the ILP rather than the trade unionists they represent:

1. Liverpool Trades Council, Minutes, June 27 1917.

2. Ibid , June 17 1917, special meeting. The vote was 29 in favour of Sailors and Firemen's resolution, 37 against. Usually there were at least 20 more delegates than this at Trades Council Meetings.

> "the attitude taken by the Council on the Sheil Park meeting, and the preposterous Leeds Convention has made it impossible for us to take any further part in their work. At the Council's last meeting the delegates, by a narrow majority, refused to endorse Havelock Wilson's attitude in holding up Ramsay MacDonald and other pacifist members of the Independent Labour Party."[1]

and stated that the breakaway involved 45,000 trade unionists.[2]

Milligan's statements situated the creation of the new Trades Council in the political situation of the Russian Revolution and the Leeds convention and the question of peace. Immediately, at the end of July, there was a demonstration in Sheil Park organised by the Liverpool branch of the British Worker's League, with four platforms all repudiating the pacifist conference of Leeds. On one, James Sexton announced that the policy of the Labour Party was indemnities and winning the war at all costs.[3]

The split within the Labour movement remained until the end of the war. Immediately the Trades Council felt compelled to draw up a circular and to repudiate charges of pacifism against them.[4] But when, in October 1917 the Railway Cerks Association proposed a resolution supporting a vigorous prosecution of the war by the

1. Liverpool Post and Mercury, July 2 1917.

2. E. Taplin, James Sexton , unpublished paper to North West Society for Labour History (June 1980) claimed that the breakaway involved up to 25,000 trade unionists in Liverpool.

3. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, July 30 1917. On November 2 1917 the Liverpool DP reported the programme of the British Workers League as being for the national control of industries vital to national defence, national assistance to industries threatened by unfair competition, statutory minimum wage and limitation of private profits, joint committees for industrial peace, for the establishment of an empire development board, housing reform and the reform of the liquor trade. A nice blend of Tory democracy and Modern Conservatism.

4. Liverpool Trades Council, Minutes, August 12, 20, 1917. At a special meeting of the E.C. they decided against sending another letter to the press but did think that they needed another in a local paper. See also August 8 1917.

government and called for indemnities and repatriation, Robinson attempted to get the RCA to withdraw it because it would lead to further splits in the Council:

> "...why press such a resolution when we are agreed together on 9/10 of our other work."[1]

The resolution from Lloyd and Watson of the NUR that it should be read in six months time was carried with 40 for and 9 against, with Robinsons' proposing an alternative motion:

> "Council reaffirms its previous resolution respecting war aims but hesitates to unreservedly pledge its support to a government whose representative Sir Auckland Geddes is now attempting to resurrect National Service and in a speech made recently based his proposed new scheme on the fact that all workers should be considered members of the army, thus again affirming the possible immediate menace of Industrial Conscription."[2]

The attendance at the Liverpool Trades Council continued to decline and they wrote repeatedly to the dockers without reply.[3]

From September 1917 to June 1918 during the resurgence of militancy on the Clyde, the Liverpool Trades Council attempted to construct support within Liverpool. The major issue of 1917 was the rise in food prices which, despite Lord Davenport being appointed Food Controller, continued to rise and shortages developed. Maximum prices were fixed on foodstuffs and to enforce them local authorities were told to set up food control committees. In August 1917, 'food

1. Liverpool TC, Minutes, October 19 1917.

2. Liverpool TC, Ibid , October 10 1917.

3. The Liverpool Trades Council were now representative of less than half the organised trades union movement in Liverpool. Whereas Sexton had been isolated in 1916 on the question of conscription, Havelock Wilson, Milligan and Sexton were not isolated in 1917 on the question of 'pacifism'. When a docker wrote to the Liverpool Trades Council with eight pages of detailed charges on the 'corrupt practices' of Sexton and Milligan', they returned the letter as being something they could do nothing about.
   Liverpool Trades Council Minutes November 9, 14 1917.

economy' committees were also established.[1] The Liverpool Trades Council, much later than the Glasgow ILP and the Glasgow Trades Council, joined in the agitation over food prices. In September the Liverpool TC and LRC formed a permanent Joint Committee to act for Labour on all matters referring to food,[2] held a public meeting on the food question,[3] and attempted to co-ordinate the Merseyside labour movement as a whole on this question.[4] The Trades Council also attempted to direct a campaign on hours and corresponded with Lord Leverhulme who agreed to aid the Trades Council on the question of the six hour day and formed a committee which interviewed him.[5] The Trades Council also attempted, very cautiously, to appeal to the two groups of workers that had always been beyond their influence: they discussed holding a meeting on Home Rule for Ireland and used another meeting to raise the question,[6] and they also held an Anti-Profiteering League meeting at George Wise's chapels where Labour councillors gave their reports.[7] They also

1. A. Clinton, op cit, p.64-70 for a summary.

2. Liverpool TC, Minutes, September 7 1917.

3. Ibid., October 7, 19 1917.

4. Bootle and Birkenhead TC porposed a Merseyside Food Control permanent Committee. September 21 1917 Liverpool TC, Minutes. Robinson proposed that Liverpool should formulate a joint policy and hold meetings in 3 districts alternatively, October 10 1917.

5. Ibid, November 9 1919. Nelson pointed out that the Committee should never have been formed because everyone knew that the workers wanted a six hour day - the problem was how to get it.

6. Ibid, October 5 1917. During the war the Home Rule Question wasn't contentious. It was assumed that the loyalty of the Irish troops had bought them Home Rule, and a new scheme for Irish self government was being prepared. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, October 24 1917.

7. Liverpool TC, November 14 1917. Although it was the railwaymen who had been the basis of the Co-operative movement in the 1890s and the labour movement later, it was also the case that the Labour clubs in the railwaymen's areas were clubs that co-existed with Protestantism.

complained at the rise in councillors salaries.[1]

None of these attempts by the Liverpool Trades Council to operate as a leadership of the Liverpool labour movement against Tory Democracy, and without the dockers and seamen, were at all effective. Firstly, Tory Democracy was quite capable of leading its own campaigns. Whereas the Glasgow Lord Provost had concentrated on the 'food economy' scheme and became known as 'Half-a-potato Dunlop'[2], Liverpool adopted the Birmingham system of food rationing [3] in December 1917, and had already opened municipal kitchens to provide cheap food for workers.[4] In Liverpool, it was the city council which led the campaign for better housing for the workers;[5] and Salvidge too had complained at the way the rise in officials' salaries had been conducted. Sēcondly, the war had strengthened the dockers and seamens unions. The Transport Workers Federation had led a very clear campaign on the question of non-unionism among new workers on the docks.[6]

1. Liverpool Trades Council Minutes November 9 1919.

2. Harry McShane and J. Smith, op cit. p. 96.

3. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, December 24 1917, December 26, 1917 December 29, 1917. It was a complicated system of tickets, coupons and permits. The government scheme which was introduced later was a more simplified version.

4. Ibid, November 1 1917. Called "Municipal retail food depots" they were organised first in the docks with 6 departments there and another three opening. They were then set up in the railwaymen's areas. It was reported that a 'substantial meal' of meat and potatoes was 4d, pudding 1½d, soup 1½d. Canteens had already been set up for the Dockers Battalion (the objections of local cafes being brushed aside) on the docks. Earl of Derby's papers. Correspondence on the Dockers Battalions. Local History Library Picton Lib. Livpl. Seventeenth Earl of Derby's papers op cit.

continued.....

5. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, November 23 1917. A Post war housing campaign was to be opened in Liverpool. An offical conference of delegates from all the municipalities was organised by the National Housing and Town Planning Council. In October Liverpool Housing schemes had een visited by Nottingham.

6. Ibid., March 4 1916. Manifesto of Transport Workers Federation against non-union labour signed by Sexton and Tom Mann. 8 per cent had not joined the union and old members were falling out therefore they were going to insist on their members being given preference which they hadn't done previously because:

> "we had no wish in any way to retard the work of the port so essential to the successful prosecution of the war."

Ibid, August 10, 1916 reported a thinly veiled threat of a transport strike on a greater scale than 1911 on the non-union question before the end of the war. Tom Mann attended from the Seamens and Firemens Union, and said they weren't going to organise a general hold up but would use other methods. Mann's position on the war was at best 'low profile' like Shinwell. On his death the Livpl. DP & M wrote, March 14 1941:

> "When the Great War broke out Tom Mann loyally supported the government and for nearly three years not only stopped and settled shipping strikes, but gave valuable help in finding crews for ships engaged on Government work, a task made easier through his position as Secretary of the Liverpool and District Transport Worker's Federation."

Smillie accused Mann of supporting Havelock Wilson stopping Ramsay MacDonald sailing and was replied to by 'one Who Knows' who said that Mann wasn't engaging in double dealing in the movement. It is however hard to believe it.

By the end of 1917 and the beginning of 1918, Liverpool was quite clearly still the disaster area of the British labour movement. In November 1917 the National Alliance of the Employers and the Employed had held a conference in Liverpool with the Lord Mayor and 80 representatives of employers and trade union leaders to discuss the problem of men returning from the army and navy.[1]

In June, the national Labour Party intervened to bring the two sides of the split together. A Labour Party conference was held at St Martins Halls. Rose spoke from the newly organised local Labour Party and said that the Labour Party in Liverpool was now so well organised that they would contest 27 wards at the municipal elections (which did not take place in 1918 after all) and 8 seats at the General Election. Sidney Webb spoke saying that 100 organisations were affiliated with 20,000 members and it was reported:

> "Mr James Sexton attended the Conference by invitation of the National Labour Executive"[2]

It was essential for the Labour Party that the breach be healed in Liverpool because of the national implications. In August there was a conference called to establish a separate and distinct Trade Union Labour Party. George Milligan was in the chair and the argument put forward was that while idealists have a right to their ideals they had no right to commit the Labour Party to ILP policy or any other.[3]

1. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, November 3 1917.

2. Ibid , June 3 1918.

3. Ibid, August 5 1918. The meeting was for Lancashire and Cheshire delegates held in Liverpool. In December the national Labour Party had published a Memorandum on War Aims that had opposed indemnities, reparations etc. This was clearly the real issue. In August 1918, Havelock Wilson argued that because the Labour Party produced this policy they would not win the 1918 General Election. Ibid, August 7 1918. The Liverpool TC sent delegates to this conference despite Hoey's statement it was a'scab affair.'

At the TUC the following month it was Havelock Wilson, seconded by George Milligan who moved an amendment for the establishment of a Trade Union Labour Party which was lost by 3,851,000 votes to 567,000.[1] This vote at the TUC gave the TUC Executive and the National Labour Party the basis on which to force a reunion in Liverpool.[2]

Despite the reunion, the post-war crisis in Liverpool demonstrated all the contradictions of the pre-war crisis: strikes, riots and even another pogrom. Liverpool did make gains in the municipal election of 1919 and this cemented the relationship, but like 1911, it was a one year event, following the 1919 Railway Strike.

1. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, September 7 1918.
2. Maddock, op cit, p.230-233.

The 1918 General Election

Even before the end of the war the 'truce' between the Conservatives and theIrish Nationalists on the city council was brought to an end and the Conservatives made a concerted effort to reaffirm the old pre-war politics. In July 1918, Clancy an Irish Nationalist Councillor attempted to out-do the patriotism of the Conservatives by putting forward a resolution demanding government action and internment of enemy aliens. By this time there were only 142 unnaturalised males and 482 unnaturalised females in Liverpool; there were 104 naturalised males and 28 naturalised females. Moreover it was pointed out that for the most part the 482 females were the British born wives of interned aliens. Still it was argued these 700 persons were a "political danger to the British Empire"[1] because they could report on the movement of ships.

But to Clancy's motion Sir Charles Petrie moved the amendment "And all Sinn Feiners, residing in the United Kingdom" and argued that owing to the operations of Sim Fein there were 100,000 troops in Ireland when they were needed at the Front and, moreover, "Every Irish regiment was denuded at the Front owing to the action of the Sinn Feiners." Harford replied, saying that he had no great feelings for Clancy's motion one way or another and that the number of 'aliens' in Britain was the result of the Victorian period. He argued that Petrie however couldn't introduce Sinn Fein into the argument because it would mean the internment of Ireland, moreover it was

1. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, July 25 1918.

Petrie's support of Carson that had caused the rise of Sinn Fein

in the first place!

> "Was it not a pitiable thing for the Leader of the Council to break the party truce and cast an odour on Irishmen who had passed out their blood in the war in a way that no other people had done (Cries of No. No.)"[1]

In Liverpool, it was the Conservatives who refused to abide by the 'Coupon', standing a Conservative candidate against the one Liberal in Liverpool who had been given the Coalition ticket.[2] The other division where theLiberals had hoped to stand was the Exchange division - where they were forced to withdraw in favour of Austin Harford. When Harford stood, the Labour candidate also withdrew.[3] For the first time women had the vote in a general election (women over thirty that is) and with the new Franchise Bill the electorate in Liverpool had trebled.[4] Despite that it was the most boring general election ever in Liverpool.[5] Without the 'Orange' card the Conservatives in Liverpool merely had their record of reform to refer to. The only real controversy was provided by the labour candidate and that wasn't because of their socialist platform, but because of a threatened libel suit with F. E. Smith.

1. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, July 25 1918.

2. Ibid , December 30 1918. 10 Unionists and 1 Irish nationalist were returned in Liverpool. The Conservative candidate beat the Coalition Liberal in the Fairfield Division. The Conservative Party had claimed that they were prepared to offer one division to the Liberals, but not Fairfield.

3. Ibid ,December 5 1918.

4. Ibid , December 30, 1918, there were 11 divisions with an electorate of c. 27,000 to 35,000 in each.

5. Ibid , December 7 1918. "Electioneering in Liverpool, generally speaking has reached the doldrum stage."

Seven Labour candidates stood in 1918. George Nelson, now the Chairman of the Liverpool Trades Council, stood against F. E. Smith in West Derby, P. J. Tevenan, of the Municipal Employee Association against Sir Watson Rutherford in Edge Hill; G. Porter in Fairfields; S. Mason, Secretary of the Ship's Construction Society in Kirkdale; Dixon Smith, a blind worker, in Walton; in Wavertree S. Wilson stood; and in West Toxteth W. A. Robinson stood. Robinson of the Transport Workers Federation and of the ILP was the only candidate from the 'left' of the old LRC.[1] Two candidates from the National Federation of Discharged Soldiers and Sailors also stood; one in Everton against Sir Harnewood Banner and only lost by 591 votes, another in Garston against both a Conservative and a Labour candidate.[2]

The platform that George Nelson stood on was the one that received the most publicity. When he spoke at Tevenan's meeting - whose platform was for the nationalisation of the land, mines, railways and essential industries and the municipalisation of all public services[3] and the milk supply, his speeches were a harking back to the old labour representation politics of pre-war days:

> "The working men of this country are sick and tired of party politics. The lessons they had had of Tory and Liberal misgovernment ought to convince them that the present was the time to take the Government of the city into their own hands."[4]

1. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, November 22, 25, December 30 1918,
2. Ibid, December 30 1918.
3. Ibid, November 22 1918.
4. Ibid.

George Nelson's own election address was not the same as Tevenan and W. A. Robinson's:

> "I stand for labour rights and honest politics. I distrust capitalist 'reforms'. Not being able to face both ways I am not a Coalitionist, I am not getting £10,000 a year. I invite your support."[1]

His programme was a Labour representation programme. It demanded a 44 hour week, restoration of trade union rights, the annulment of DORA, a pension for widows and a rise in the old age pensions, and argued (an important question for Liverpool given the war experience) that women should have theright to keep British nationality on marriage.[2]

Nelson's campaign was supported by donations from a notable Liberal which caused the Liverpool Daily Post to comment that many Liberals were 'throwing in their lot with labour' because of the non-militant attitude of Liverpool Liberalism.[3] He was threatened with a libel action however, but by arguing that his nephews had all been killed in the army while F. E. Smith and his brother had landed 'soft' jobs. When challenged with a libel action he refused to repeat it, but did argue that Carson had dined with the Kaiser in 1913 to get armed support for Ulster's revolt against the Crown and must have given the Germans naval information.[4]

1. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, November 29, . December 4 1918.
2. Ibid , December 4 1918.
3. Ibid, December 10 1918.
4. Ibid.

In Edge Hill, Watson Rutherford stood on his record as a Tory Democrat against Tevenan of the MEA claiming that Edge Hill was both the most patriotic division (sending just over 8,000 out of 30,000 electorate into the army and navy) and also claiming the support of the railwaymen, Post Office employees and the tramway employees. Tevenan was the organiser of the MEA and had organised the majority of the tramway men into the MEA against the Corporation inspired Transport and Vehicle Workers Union. But Watson Rutherford said that he, Rutherford,

> "was almost alone in the City Council in supporting the men in forming a union of their own."[1]

and this was true. Rutherford, Grand Master of the Loyal Orange Lodge in England before the War, was a particular breed of Tory Democrat.

Of all the Conservatives it was Leslie Scott, who stood in Exchange against Harford, who understood most clearly that the days of the 'old' politics were numbered. He argued that the electorate should not think in terms of 'old' politics but realise that Toryism would be made stronger by Lloyd George Liberalism.[2] It was not only Liverpool 'Toryism' that was in difficulties in 1918. The 'constitutional' Irish Nationalism of Liverpool was also left rudderless by the growth of Sinn Fein. T. P. O'Connor's election speeches were a return to the question of Catholic schools.[3] But all the 'societies' of Liverpool had been constructed around Conservatism and Irish Nationalism and

1. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, December 7 1918.
2. Ibid, November 28 1918.
3. Ibid, November 25 1918.

for the next nine years Liverpool politics would be in transition from the old pre-war politics to the new "Modern Conservatism" that had emerged during the war out of the remnants of "New Liberalism", as both the history of the post war crisis in Liverpool and the history of the twenties shows.

Chapter 9 Post-war crisis in Glasgow and Liverpool

It has often been argued that the 1919-1920 post-war crisis was the deepest faced by the British ruling class during the 20th century. This has led to the assumption that it was in this period that the British working class was remade - or failed to make a revolution. It has also been assumed it was a 'modern' working class. All these points are true, but they are not the whole story.

In Glasgow, despite the fact that both John Maclean and the SLP saw the Russian Revolution and the establishment of Soviets as the road to socialism, their strategy in the crisis was still based on an earlier perspective. The Forty Hours' strike was called by all the organisations of the Glasgow Labour movement and it reinforced Maclean's belief that in a crisis all those organisations would express true working class interests. Moreover, the George Square riot was an isolated incident, and the bringing of troops into Glasgow did not create a conflict situation despite the continuation of the strike for a further ten days.

In Glasgow the ILP continued to lead the working class movement, triumphing in the municipal elections of 1920. Between 1918 and 1920 the Glasgow revolutionary left attempted to reorganise, but without success.

A small strike wave in Liverpool in 1919 did not involve the dockers and so failed to generalise into a general strike. It was followed by an anti-black riot in the South End of the docks, and by rioting and looting in the North End during the police strike. Although the Liverpool unofficial railway movement was reputed the strongest in the country, it could not carry a solidarity action with the police.

The subsequent success of the railwaymen's own strike was the backcloth to Labour's advances in the municipal elections of November 1919. The Labour forces again attempted to reconstruct a united Liverpool Labour movement, and again, despite the disarray of the Orange and Green forces, they failed.

For all that was new in the post-war crisis, the experience was still largely interpreted through the forms and structures created in the pre-war era.

Glasgow and the Post-War Crisis

The defeat of the Labour Party in the General Election of 1918 strengthened those in the Glasgow labour movement (BSP, SLP and ILP members) who were arguing for industrial action in order to win wider, political demands. The 1919 Forty Hours Strike was an attempt to win a shorter working week in order to solve the problem of unemployment: it was the same strategy that Tom Mann had proposed after the 1911 Transport Strike.[1] It was also a strike that appeared to confirm syndicalist belief in the unifying power of industrial action rather than political agitation.

The story of the Forty Hour strike has been told in detail in many places,[2] but some aspects of the strike require to be stressed. Firstly, the issue on which the strike took place on Monday January 27 1919, was one that was only immediately confronting the Engineering and Allied Trades although later the dockers got a 44 hour agreement and other unions rejected 48 and 47 hours. Their employers had introduced a 47 hour week after the Christmas break without waiting for the results of union ballots. Originally the Clyde Workers Committee intended to put forward the same list of demands as the miners i.e. for a six hour five day week and £1 a day.[3] But the Joint Committee composed of members of the STUC, the Glasgow Trades Council, the CWC and the District Committee of the ASE (Harry Hopkins who had been elected as the local organiser) simply put forward the demand for the 40 hour week.

1. See above p.383; The Transport Worker, February 1912.

2. T. Bell, op cit, p.160-233; Shinwell op cit; p.59-60; Gallacher op cit; p.217-233; Glasgow 1919. The story of the 40 Hours Strike with an introduction by Harry McShane (interviewer Joan Smith) The Molendinar Press contains reproductions of the strike bulletins, contemporary accounts and photographs.

3. N. Milton, op cit, p.187.

The Forty Hours Strike was thus a 'constructed' strike around an issue which socialists who had been influenced by syndicalist ideas thought the most important. During the following year, however, the issues over which other groups of workers struck were more likely to be the question of wages (putting the war time bonus on the pre-war wage) and of the retention of a national wage for the industry. Questions like these were not to the fore in the Forty Hours Strike because the strike was not a spontaneous strike (however spontaneous the response) and depended upon a prior commitment to a labour vision, and support for the organisations which called the strike.

The pattern of response to the strike call once again suggests that the most militant sections were not those that the CWC had concentrated upon. There was a better response from the railway workshops ofCowlairs and Springburn (who came out the first day) and from the shipyards than from some of the CWC factories. Barr and Stroud's had to be brought out by a mass picket from Govan and Parkhead. As an area Govan was solid.[1] Moreover part of John Maclean's dream had come true. The Miners Reform Committee in Lanarkshire which he and MacDougall had concentrated their organisational work upon,[2] helped shut down the Lanarkshire Mines.

> "The Lanarkshire miners mean business, and all the pits in the county were idle yesterday, by arrangement with the Executive and the Reform committee. The Executive were at first opposed to the strike until the rank and file marched into Hamilton, occupied the Union offices, and 'demanded' the Executive to capitulate...

1. The Strike Bulletin, Organisation of the 40 Hours Movement January 30. 1919, January 31. 1919.

2. N. Milton, op cit, p.144-145. MacDougall called the inaugural meeting of the Lanarkshire Miners Reform Movement in Hamilton (patterned after South Wales) in July 1917. This movement was behind a one day strike for peace. Maclean concentrated much of his Scottish Labour College work in the Lanarkshire area. See also H. McShane and J. Smith op cit, p.103.

> "The Reform Committee are organising in fine style, and are prepared to run the strike from the Union office if the Executive funk their duty."[1]

Although the Forty Hours strike appeared a justification for the industrial unionist strategy of linking up different rank and file movements in different unions, it also appeared to justify a new political strategy for Maclean - that of building a separate Scottish party. Given Maclean's theory that all sections of the working class would ultimately link up and take power through all their different organisations (Co-operative movement, Labour Party, Trade Unions) then the only reason for the non-response in England to the40 Hours Strike call was that inherently the Scottish working class was more progressive. Outside of Scotland the only area to respond as Glasgow did, was Belfast. The parallel between the situation in Scotland and the situation in Ireland was one that was easy to draw.

That parallel was not necessarily correct. In Belfast, what the Forty Hour strike demonstrated was the spontaneous movement of Protestant workers (similar to the 1911 Transport Strike) in support of a Labour rather than an Orange vision. In Scotland what it demonstrated was the enormous network of 'Labour' societies that had been created, and also the influence of 'labour' men within the trade union movement in Scotland. Scottish trade unionism was a comparatively late development and many of the officials and organisers were ILP members, whose beliefs had been underwritten by the most 'radical' Liberal commonsense in Britain.

1. The Strike Bulletin, Organisation of the 40 Hours Movement, January 31 1919.

The 'Strike Bulletin' of the 40 Hours movement was a Strike Bulletin of a movement with a tradition. When referring to the 30,000 registered unemployed in Glasgow it also referred back to the 1908 agitation.[1] Similarly, it was assumed that the readers of the Bulletin would be interested in, and supportive of, the mass strike in Bombay:

> "The strikers number 150,000 and are giving a great lead to the downtrodden in India to secure better wages and conditions. A victory in Scotland will help our comrades in India who are with us heart and soul"[2]

Part of that tradition was the history of the Clyde movement during the First World War. Thus on the first day of the strike at the large St Andrews Hall meetings one of the resolutions passed was the following:

> "That no rent or income tax shall be paid until a satisfactory settlementof the demand for a 40 hour week has been conceded"[3]

Again it was assumed that it was possible to call a rent strike even in circumstances where rents had been frozen throughout the war. The 40 Hours strike assumed a very high level of political consciousness among the strikers.

It was also the strike bulletin of a movement backed by the political organisations of Glasgow. P. Dollan (ILP) edited the Bulletin, which appeared daily and on some days the circulation reached 20,000.

1. The Strike Bulletin, Organisation of the 40 Hours Movement, January 31 1919.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.

The Strike Bulletin was a major source of finance for the strike which provided £527 14s 10d. of the total income of £850 approx. (of which just over £334 was spent on printing costs).[1]

The distribution of the strike bulletin via a fleet of bicycles was described by Tom Bell.[2] Throughout the city, besides the calling of mass meetings in Cinema Halls, local trade unionists and socialist halls were used as distribution points.

The movement had faced individual arrest and deportation but was, unlike Liverpool, unused to riot. The reaction to Government suppression was quite distinct from that in Liverpool. On Friday January 31, the 100,000 crowd in George Square (where demonstrations had been banned since 1908) began to force the trams to stop by cutting the cables. (The stopping of the trams during demonstrations had been one of the demands on the previous Wednesday). It was this that led to the reading of the Riot Act and the police charge. But once this had happened and the troops and tanks were moved into Glasgow the following day, there was no more trouble despite the fact that the strike lasted for another ten days.

When the strike ended in Glasgow it did not end in a demoralised movement:

> "There was no ill feeling about the strike or what had happened. It was a completely harmonious movement by the engineers, and we didn't think we had been defeated. I am sure that if there had been another movement, a strike of the Triple Alliance for the miners, or some other national strike, we would have come out again. We were disappointed that we didn't get the response outside of Glasgow that we had expected, but we didn't realise that the whole shop stewards movement was on its last legs.

1. Statement in the Glasgow Trades Council Records, Mitchell Library, Glasgow.

2. T. Bell, op cit, p.160-173.

> "We regarded the 40-hour strike not as a revolution but as a beginning. Other things would follow; it was but the first rank and file agitation to be led by socialists after the war."[1]

The report of the "Clyde Defence Fund' shows a movement whose networks were still intact. Of the £3,098 collected for the Defence Fund approx. £500 came from the STUC and local union districts (ASE, The Workers Union, Operative Bakers, Ironmoulders, ETU, Bricklayers and Sheet Metal Workers), £300 from the ILP, £200 from the profits of the Strike Bulletin, £570 from districts outside of Glasgow, £160 from meetings, concerts in Glasgow and the remainder of the money - over £1300 - was collected on cards.[2]

The Glasgow left may well have agreed with Shinwell that the effect of the 40-hours strike was far reaching despite defeat:

> "Before the trial the strikes had, of course, petered out. They had the effect of forcing the Government to pay lip service to the welfare of the State. A Wages (Temporary Regulation) Act forbade any reductions. Rent restriction was retained. The miners got a 7-hour day, and when the National Industrial Conference met in February the employers were no longer dictating terms - they were ready to discuss them. It even agreed in principle on a maximum 48-hour week for all industries and all workers. There can be little doubt that these small concessions were given because of 'Red Friday' in Glasgow - red only because of the blood which was of the rare instances of police mishandling of a legal and loyal meeting caused to be split."[3]

Certainly on May Day 1919, a Thursday, the Clyde once again struck. The left considered it larger than May Day 1918 - 150,000 rather than 110,000.[4]

1. H. McShane and J. Smith, op cit, p. 109.

2. Glasgow Trades Council Records.'40 Hours Strike Records' Mitchell Library. Unfortunately a detailed record of the cards is not there.

3. E. Shinwell, op cit, p.65-66.

4. Forward, May 3 1919, May 10 1919. See earlier weeks for the list of organisations in the procession. Once again the strike was called by the May Day Committee and the delegates to that body.

There was thus no 'reaction' against the 40 Hours Strike in the Glasgow labour movement despite an incredible anti-Bolshevik hysteria developing in the Glasgow 'middle class'[1]. This hysteria - like its branches throughout Britain whether in 'The Middle Classes Union', or the People's League or its half dozen other organisational manifestations - was centred upon the argument that the middle classes were being 'ground' between the 'upper' and 'nether' millstones of Capital and Labour, and also upon a double-headed monster: "Lenin-and-Trotsky" sometimes known as 'Trotsky-and-Lenin'. The year 1919 did witness a profound crisis in the professional employees in Britain which, like the crisis at the national level, restructured British politics. After the experience of war-time Britain and the crisis years of 1919 all the remnants of Liberal hegemony were obliterated - except within the Labour movement.

Immediately the creation of organisations like the Middle Classes Union meant that during the Railway strike of 1919, it was possible to build a blackleg organisation, whereas in pre-war Glasgow it had been impossible.[2] The railwayman's strike was over the question of a 'living wage' - the placing of the entire war-time bonus on the pre-war rate. (This was granted to ASLEF and not to the NUR. Both ASLEF and the NUR refused the offer). This demand had widespread support inside Glasgow. A public demonstration on Glasgow Green attracted 15-20,000 and William Shaw (Trades Council) and Councillor James Walker (STUC) as well as Pat Dollan (ILP

1. See Press-cutting Books, the Middle Classes Union. Glasgow City Archives (G2.3.1. covers the period 22 Feb. 1919 -July 1919. G2.3.2. 12 July 1919 - September 1919. G2.3.3. 6 September 1919 - 28th October 1919).
   The organisations concerned shared the ideology identified by Schweitzer in Big Business in the Third Reich (1964) ChapterII i.e. anti-bureaucratic and anti-government, anti-profiteering and anti-capitalist, anti-bolshevik and anti-labour.

2. The Glasgow and District Railwaymen's Strike Bulletin No. 4 October 1 1919. Students also volunteered as blacklegs.

councillor) spoke at it.[1] At a mass meeting at St Andrews Halls Smillie and Dollan also spoke, and there were two overflow meetings. The resolution passed at these meetings:

> "That this mass meeting of Glasgow citizens congratulates the railway workers of this country on the fine response they have made to the request of their Unions for united action to enforce the principle of a living wage for all grades; and, further, call on all other workers to refrain from doing anything which would hinder the railwaymen in their great struggle for a higher standard of life."[2]

was generally adhered to. From the beginning of the strike it was solid in Glasgow and the rest of Scotland and workers that worked with the railwaymen began to come out, especially small groups of carters. Warehouse workers who were asked to make up beds for blacklegs also struck. All the general unions refused to handle 'black' goods. On the railways itself the supervisors, ASE fitters, and Electricians (ETU) came out and the dockers refused to load. By the end of the week the few workers who had not been on strike had all come out. The government were having to use the army and motor vehicles and the strike bulletin reported individuals as not answering the call up and one policeman as going 'sick'.[3]

The Government were actually demanding that the railwaymen accept 40s a week minimum wage and this underlies the solidarity that was shown:

> "The brutal attempt of the Coalition Profiteers to drive the railwaymen back into the inferno of low wages and poor conditions is now resented by organised labour in all parts

1. The Glasgow and District Railwaymen's Strike Bulletin No. 2 September 29 1919.

2. Ibid., The Strike Bulletin No 2 September 29. 1919.

3. Ibid., ibid No 9, Monday October 6.

> of the country ... The workers understand that our defeat is their defeat. That is why they are rallying in thousands to our aid."[1]

At the time the lowest wage for a Glasgow labourer was 55s and all the transport workers had won higher rates than this during the war. Smillie also drew the same lessons in his speech at the St Andrews Halls:

> "The Government were not fighting merely the railwaymen in this fight. They had more than that in their minds. They were preparing to reduce at the earliest possible moment the wages given to the workers as war bonus, to reduce them all over, on the grounds that the cost of living was going to come down."[2]

Smillie added,

> "We are desirous of endeavouring to help the railwaymen in their claims as much as we possibly can".3

In fact, throughout the strike, J. H. Thomas constantly refused offers of solidarity action despite the desire of both the Miners and the other Transport Workers to come out. The Government offered new terms the weekend that the Transport Workers Federation met to determine strike action. October 1919 came much closer to the General Strike than February 1919 - even to the extent of government preparation, the organisation of blacklegs, the use of troops and police who were stretched to full capacity to cover a strike of 300,000 railwaymenwhich affected another 300,000 workers and took place nation-wide.

1. The Glasgow and District Railwaymen's Strike Bulletin No. 3 September 30 1919.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

The Strike Bulletin was extremely useful in countering such devices as false telegrams announcing the return to work, and rumours that the 'Comrades of the War' and the Discharged Soldiers and Sailors Federation were blacklegging. It also, however, did not raise any wider demands than the strike began with and its policies were much closer to Dollan's wing of the ILP. It printed Thomas' defence of the railwaymen which included the following:

> "I have long foreseen, and have never hesitated to warn my own people against the danger of an upheaval that is not merely one of hours and wages, but an attack upon the whole constitution of the country. I would be blind to all experience and knowledge if I did not say there are some that would welcome that. The press by making that the issue are rendering the greatest possible disturbance. That is not the issue upon which my Executive have taken this great step. It is not the issue upon which I find myself giving effect to their instructions."[1]

and commented, "Jim Thomas' reply to the Government statement was a masterpiece".[2] Geddes was described as "the real anarchist conspirator against the community" and the Bulletin commented:

> "Our cause is just and requires no violence to commend it. With folded arms we stand pasive registers; our only shield is the justice of our cause"[3]

The cause of the last comment was the vast deployment of troops in the strike and the attitude of the Bulletin was "We are all brothers in the same Labour family, and no act of ours will injure them in any way."[4]

1. The Glasgow and District Railwaymen's Strike Bulletin No. 2, September 29, 1919.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid, No 3, September 30 1919.
4. Ibid.

Neither the Clyde Workers Committee, nor the SLP, nor John Maclean and James MacDougall played any significant part in attempting to generalise the railwaymen's strike despite the fact that in August 1919 the last national conference of the District Vigilance Committees of the railway unions had called for a national strike to secure nationalisation of the mines and railways.[1]

The Strike Bulletin was published by the S.L. Press (as was the 40 Hours Strike bulletins) but the strikers of the North Railway area (Springburn, Maryhill, Polmadie) and of the South Side (Kingston, South Side district) met in the five local ILP Halls. Dollan's involvement appears central.[2]

Maclean who had been demanding a General Strike, and whose eyes were still fixed on the Miners, now ceased campaigning for that strike:

> "A general strike should be avoided for the moment as the Government has shown its preparedness, amongst other things, by its control of food and vehicles. A General Strike would have behind the impetus of a Labour attack, whereas the impetus is still on the side of the capitalist government ... A respite will enable ... us to clarify the vision of our class and perfect industrial organisation on a sound class basis."[3]

Later that same month he wrote a pamphlet for the municipal elections attacking the Tramways General Manager, Dalrymple and putting forward a series of demands on their behalf.[4]

1. B. Pribicevic, D. Phil. Thesis The Demand for Workers' Control in the Railways, Coalmining and Engineering Industries, 1910-1922, (Oxford 1957), p.126.

2. 'The Glasgow and District Railwaymen's Strike Bulletin', op cit, No. 3, September 30.

3. N. Milton, op cit, p.213, quoted.

4. Ibid, p.214.

The Tramwaymen in Glasgow were poorly organised[1] but it didn't occur to Glasgow socialists to use a railwaymen's strike as an organising drive.

Like subsequent historians, the Glasgow left , consistently underemphasised the influence and power of the railwaymen in this period. A railway dispute immediately generalised into every town and every village in a way that a dockers' dispute, an engineers' dispute or a miners' dispute did not: in the Triple Alliance they were the critical group and were ultimately critical in the General Strike.

Maclean's policy during the crisis of 1919-20, was still an industrial unionist policy on the one hand - at a meeting to celebrate the Russian Revolution he said - 'The Triple Alliance of Labour must come to take the place of Parliament. On with the class war '[2] - and a political strategy on the other. Thus, while industrial activity was at its height during the whole of 1919, Maclean worked both through the Scottish district of the BSP and wrote for 'The Call' and worked with those who remained from the old CWC and wrote for 'The Worker'.[3] He supported a 'Fighting Programme' for all workers of a six hour working day, a minimum of £1 per day, and no dismissals.

But the questions that dominated the year 1920 were political questions. Simple solidarity with Russia became a question of

1. Glasgow Trades Council Minutes n.d. but late 1919 application for affiliation to GTC from United Vehicle Workers, who were just beginning to organise in the Glasgow Tramways and claimed that the Corporation did not apply the rates agreed in negotiations. On 27 September, Sir Robert Horne said that the Corporation did have to pay the national award to the Tramwaymen. At the time of the Railwaymen's strike both the United Vehicle Workers and the MEA had claims in for the tramwaymen.

2. N. Milton, op cit, p.220.

3. Interestingly he wrote more industrial articles for 'The Call' and more political articles for 'The Worker'. See the collection edited by N. Milton John Maclean. In the Rapids of Revolution (1978) Section 6, articles on industrial disputes in 1919 all appear in The Call , articles on Ireland, the coming War in America, appear in The Worker.

affiliation to the Third International on a very strict list of principles and the formation of a Communist Party in every country. Second, for Maclean the critical question became solidarity with the Irish Struggle. As with the anti-war struggle Maclean's attempt to create a political agitation on the question of Ireland was one that isolated him from the 'revolutionaries' although not from the majority of socialists in the Glasgow ILP or in the Glasgow Trades Council, and certainly not from the Irish in the mining districts.

Support for Russia was widespread in Glasgow. There were many demonstrations in 1919, but at the end of 1919, there was a concerted effort to call a twenty four hour strike against the intervention of the Allies in Russia. The Glasgow ILP Federation wrote to the Glasgow Trades Council asking them to consider the proposal and the Industrial Committee of the GTC passed it by 49 votes to 26 and sent the resolution to the Glasgow 'Hands off Russia Committee'.[1]

Immediately another Hands off Russia Demonstration was organised on November 30[2] but ultimately members of the Glasgow Trades Council argued for a postponement of their decision on a twenty four hour strike because the whole question was coming up at the British TUC.[3] Instead they wrote to the largest unions and their delegates informing them of their decision.[4]

In January 1920, the Scottish Division of the ILP voted to affiliate to the Third International and a section of the Glasgow

1. GTC, Minutes, November 5 1919.
2. Ibid , Executive Committee, November 11, 1919.
3. Ibid , December 3, 1919.
4. Ibid, See also A. Hutt The Post-War History of the British Working Class (1937), p.35-36.

membership were instrumental in forming a 'Left Wing' in May 1920 after the National Conference had refused to affiliate. This 'Left Wing' was led in Glasgow by Helen Crawfurd.[1] At the same time Maclean had broken from the BSP, or had been eased out, because of disagreements over strategy. Their policy had become limited to a 'Hands off Russia' campaign and he was not prepared to drop his educational work.[2] The SLP was split: the leaders that had been transformed by the war, Bell, McManus et al, formed a 'Communist Unity Group' from the beginning of 1920 but no longer led the SLP because they had been defeated on the vote to affiliate to the Labour Party, though not defeated on the vote to join a unified Communist Party.[3]

The central political question which could have been instrumental in forming a united Communist Party out of the left in the ILP, BSP, and SP, and out of a section of workers untouched by these organisations - namely, the question of national self-determination for Ireland - was never debated. Without a concrete political campaign in the context of which, questions like affiliation to the Third Internationalorstanding for elections became meaningful, it was inevitable that only the 'philosophers' of the socialist organisations (and not the two most famous - Maclean and Pankhurst) would join the new CP. Moreover, the lack of a revolutionary Irish campaign meant that the Irish were delivered into the arms of the new Labour Party, which was

1. W. Kendall, op cit, p. 213

2. N. Milton , op cit p 227 . H. McShane and J. Smith, op cit. p. 112. H McShane's branch of the BSP had simply seceded, taking its rooms, because the BSP wasn't doing anything.

3. R. Challinor, op cit, p. 243.

reconstructed on an individual membership base with none of the secularism that was the hallmark of the Scottish ILP.

There was a genuine concern about Ireland and initial moves to create a 'Hands of Ireland' movement in Glasgow of the Irish, had begun.

In August 1919, the 'Springburn Irish Labour Party' wrote to the Trades Council calling for delegates to a conference to discuss a 'Hands off Ireland' demonstration.[1] But despite a military occupation of Ireland the question remained an Irish issue, with general political support in Glasgow for some form of independence, until the arrival of the Black and Tans in Ireland in March-April 1920. From the beginning of 1920 the IRA had conducted a 'guerilla' war with the use of 'flying columns'. The Government response was to create, from ex-soldiers, a section of the Royal Irish Constabulary (the Black and Tans), and from ex-officers an Auxiliary Division of the RIC.[2]

It was the counter-terrorism of the Black and Tans which created a 'sympathy' movement in Britain. In Glasgow the May Day demonstration (again held on a workday, a Saturday, and again called the May Day Committee with its individual delegate structure of upwards of 165 bodies) was attended by 120,000 at the Flesher's Haugh after 50,000 had marched. They passed the following resolution:

> "That this meeting declares for the overthrow of the Capitalist system of production for profit and the

1. GTC, Minutes, 27 August, 1919.

2. G. Dangerfield, The Damnable Question, 1977, p.316-319.

> establishment of a co-operative commonwealth based on production for use, and further, that this meeting of workers send their fraternal greetings to the Russian Soviet Republic and the workers of the world. We further protest against the arrest and deportation of subjects without trial; further we urge the immediate withdrawal of the military forces in Ireland and all armies of occupation elsewhere, and declare in favour of the first day in May being observed as International Labour Day."[1]

Later that year 'Forward' opened a subscription list against the 'Black and Tan' terror in Ireland.[2] The one person who campaigned on the question was John Maclean.

On May Day 1920, John Maclean appeared with the new copy of 'Vanguard'. His strategy of relying on the separate battalions of the working class was now completely established because all he had was a paper and his own education classes; he was no longer a member of the BSP. Once again he put forward 'The Fighting Programme': a six hour day, a minimum wage of £1 a day, reduction of prices to half the present level, rationing of work to absorb the unemployed or payment of full wages to the unemployed.[3] And added:

> "Every worker understands this programme, powerful unions have already agreed to items 1 and 2, Bob Smillie has centred attention and thought on high prices, and Tom Mann is going strong on economic security. Surely it is possible for socialists of the left wing to work through unions as our comrades in S. Wales and through public agitations to force a special labour Congress to decide on action for the realisation of the programme. The prosecution of the industrial class war will break the capitalist shell sooner

1. Forward, May 8. 1920.
2. Forward, December 4. 1920.
3. Vanguard, May 1920.

> or later and:
>
> We ask shop stewards and shop committees to meet and arrange a gathering of the men in each work and yard to discuss this programme or any better one. Cowards submit, men fight." [1]

Maclean's strategy was still to appeal to the separate organisations of the working class for the prosecution of 'the industrial class war' but, unlike the rest of the Glasgow left he was not an 'economist'; he understood that there was a 'political' class war beyond education work. In May-June 1920, he launched a massive propaganda campaign on Ireland in the mining districts,[2] while continuing his Scottish Labour College classes.

In May 1920 he wrote, "The Irish Tragedy: Scotland's Disgrace" and sold this at meetings all over Glasgow and Lanarkshire, including the 'Orange' centres such as Motherwell.[3]

In India when the Irish Connaught Rangers refused to fire, Maclean described it as 'The Greatest Deed in British History'. On the death of Terence MacSwiney, the Lord Mayor of Cork, after a hunger strike of 74 days , he produced 150,000 leaflets.[4] The Glasgow Trades Council had also attempted to intervene but only by writing to the Home Secretary conveying the resolution moved by George Buchanan:

> "That the Glasgow Trades and Labour Council representing 350 Branches of Trade Unions and an affiliated membership of over 100,000 members, appeals to the Home Secretary in the name of humanity for the life of the Lord Mayor of Cork who is dying in Brixton Prison for a principle he holds sacred."[5]

1. Vanguard, May 1920.
2. N. Milton, op cit, p.236-241.
3. Ibid , H. McShane and J. Smith, op cit, p.116-117.
4. Ibid, H. McShane and J. Smith, p.117.
5. Glasgow Trades Council Minutes, September 1920. See Forward, September 1920.

Already in June the GTC passed a resolution for the Special STUC conference saying that the 'only solution of the Irish problem is the granting of complete self-government', declaring that 'the engine of repression ' i.e. the army of occupation should be withdrawn and adding that failing Government action then 'Direct Action' should be taken by Scottish Trade Unionists.[1] They were also clearly horrified by the sentence that Larkin received in America,[2] (while accepting an argument that there was nothing they could do about it), and the anti-Catholic pogrom taking place in the Belfast shipyards after the July Orange walk.[3]

The question of Ireland was from August, however, overshadowed by the Polish-Russian war and allied intervention against Russia. On May 29, the Glasgow ILP Federation had called a meeting on Ireland, Russia and Poland; but by August the Russian question was the priority. The London 'Hands off Russia' conference which had 1,044 delegates, 689 representing trade unions and 355 representing local Labour Parties, had called for the setting up of Councils of Action, for the withdrawal of labour if British troops intervened and financing the councils from a levy from affiliated organisations.[4]

1. GTC, Minutes, June 16 1920.

2. Ibid, June 25, June 1920.

3. GTC, Minutes, August 11, 25 1920. GTC took collecting books from the Belfast Trades Council to organise a collection.

4. Ibid, Political Minute Book, August 18 1920. Report back of delegates. Shinwell had previously moved thatrepresentatives should not be sent and then moved that the council should be bound by no decision to take action except. in 'the direction of supporting no intervention in Poland and Russian war" This last amendment was accepted". GTLC Minutes, 11 August 1920.

G.T. & L.C. agreed to their E.C.'s recommendation that twelve members of the council plus two representatives of each District Committee or Executive Committee of each Trades Union and two representatives from the Co-operative Societies, ILP, Communist Party and SLP should be invited to an intial meeting on September 5.[1] Sixty six delegates attended from thirty three organisations and they set up three committees - for Publicity and Information, Supply and Transport, and Strike Arrangements - and formed an Executive Committee composed of three delegates from each committee plus the Chairman, the Secretary and the Treasurer.[2]

But despite the fact that after the 1918 Labour Party reorganisation the Trades Council had become the Glasgow Trades and Labour Council with direct political affiliations, it was still not a leadership body either industrially or politically. The twelve delegates it sent were from unions like the Workers Union, the National Union of Clerks, NUR, Dockers, and Bakers.[3] Moreover the Glasgow ILP Federation had already called the August 8 demonstration against intervention in Russia in response to the National Labour circular. The GTLC co-operated with that demonstration and also arranged a joint indoor meeting with the ILP Federation.[4] At that meeting the invited speakers were Ramsay MacDonald, E. Shinwell (on Ireland) and P. Dollan and John Wheatley.[5]

1. Glasgow Trades and Labour Council Political Minute Book, 18 August 1920. The Communist Party referred to was probably the attempt to regroup the Glasgow left forces. see H. McShane and J. Smith, op cit, p.118-119.

2. GTLC, Minutes, Council Minutes September 8 1920. The officers were those ofthe Trades Council, Wm Leonard, Chairman Wm Shaw, Secretary and George Browning, Treasurer.

3. GTLC, Political Minutes Book August 18 1920

4. GTLC Special Committee meeting. August 6 1920. Minutes

5. GTLC Executive Commitee, Minute, August 10 1920. Forward, August 18 1920, August 21 1920. The demonstration was on Ireland as well as Russia. Shaw and Reagan were joint Secretaries.

A twenty four hour stoppage did not take place on the question of Russia or on Ireland, but did take place on a question that had always concerned the ILP - rents.

The Special STUC in July 1920, passed the following resolution:

> "This Congress energetically protests against the proposed enormous increase in rents of working-class houses; and points out that already masses of the people have the bitterest struggle to live because of the high cost of commodities. Further, it calls upon the Executive of the Trades Unions affiliated to take whatever steps are necessary to render the fullest possible support in the rent agitation for a No Rent Campaign until the threatened impositions are withdrawn."[1]

and then circulated all affiliated societies and Trades Councils in Scotland. The Scottish Labour Housing Association convened a Scottish National Conference of Trade Unions, Trades Councils, Co-operative Societies, Women's Guilds, Labour and Socialist Organisations on Saturday 31st July 1920 - 'perhaps the most representative conference of the Scottish Working Class movement held yet.'[2] The twenty four hours stoppage on Monday August 23, had the support of the National Union of Scottish Mine-Workers and of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation. It was successful but Andrew McBride was asking what they did next? The obvious next step for the ILP was in fact the campaign on the municipal elections of 1920.

1920 was a municipal general election in Glasgow. Even the contests for the 1919 municipal seats when they had won another five seats(making their number of Councillors 24), had been

1. GTLC Executive Committee, Minute, August 18 1920. Letter from STUC Parliamentary committee.

2. Ibid; See Forward, August 7 1920 which claimed 1,000 delegates. One section of the SLP still saw the "No Rents Agitation" as a 'stunt', Forward, August 14 1920.

fought with 1920 in mind. Before the 1919 election, a delegate meeting to determine policy for both that election and 1920 was held.[1] In 1920 the municipal struggle was fought along parliamentary lines with Labour opposing Councillors of 'Good Government' on a clear labour platform that had been worked out from 1914. The poll in the election was 78.57 per cent, Labour won 44 seats out of the 111.[2]

Forward announced that these municipal gains would result in a victory of 9 parliamentary seats in Glasgow,[3] and in 1922, they won everything (plus a freak result).

In Glasgow municipal and parliamentary roads to socialism were still a believable strategy despite the experience of the war and the post war crisis. The question was how many of the ILP left would break from the ILP, and where the Irish who had clearly voted Left would go. The crisis did not end in 1920.

1. GTLC, Minutes, Circular to affiliated bodies, September 25 1919.
2. GTLC, Annual Report, 1920-21.
3. Forward, November 13 1920.

Post war crisis in Liverpool

Immediately in 1919-1920 Liverpool working class politics reflected both the old pre-war politics and the new developments that had taken place during the war. In April 1919 there was yet another revolt of the dockers against an agreement signed by their Executive. Then there was a wave of small 'mini strikes', followed by a pogrom at the South-End of the docks against blacks. This was followed by the Police Strike of August 1919, the Railwaymen's strike of October 1919 and Labour victories in the 1919 Municipal elections.

The dockers' agreement, known as the 'The Dockers Charter' was for a 44 hour week, 12s.2d a day and 6s.1d for the Saturday ending at noon and for overtime at time and a half. (Typically, the 'revolution' of the dockers working conditions was in wages and hours and not in 'decasualisation' which would have been much more difficult to reverse later). The men at the North-End of the docks objected however to the 7.45 am start. For three days 5,000 men at the White Star and Allen lines presented themselves just before 8.00am instead, and were not signed on, despite the fact that every other port was working the new conditions and so were many of the South-End dockers.[1]

Eventually the North-End dockers were got back in by marching one group of dockers who were for the new agreement up to a mass meeting of those who weren't i.e. from the Strand Road up to Bankhall. The union officials also argued that the strike threatened the Transport Workers Federation unity which was the dockers' 'strongest weapon'.[2]

1. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, April 23 1919; April 24 1919.
2. Ibid , April 25. 1919.

In June, over a thousand lightermen came out on the Mersey.[1] A section of the Building Trades Federation struck.[2] Ships stewards struck.[3] The clerks organised themselves in a Mersey District Commercial and Technical workers guild.[4] The tramwaymen went into dispute[5] and so did the men working in the temporary floating harbour.[6] If it wasn't for the fact that the dockers had already settled, this small strike wave of the badly organised sections of the Liverpool docks could have been much bigger. It was in this context of a mini-strike wave which didn't involve the dockers that two riots took place: one at the South-End of thedocks against blacks, and one at the North-End during the Police strike.

On June 5, a dispute broke out between 'negroes' and white men in Pitt Street after which 5 men were detained in hospital and 11 'coloured men' were charged with attempting to murder three policemen who had

1. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, June 9 1919; June 10. The tugboatmen resumed work because Milligan insisted they return whilst negotiations were in progress. June 17, 18; the Bargemen and lightermen returned for 1 week, demanding permanent mates on all crafts and higher overtime rates. Bargeowners conceded next day.

2. Ibid., June 12; June 15. Plumbers and Joiners came out, bricklayers didn't. Joiners demanding 1s 8d per hour should be increased to 2s 2d. June 18 1919; individual building firms conceded increase.

3. Ibid , June 15 1919. Overtime rates were again the issue.

4. Ibid , June 20 1919. Shipping Clerical Staff Guild were the main movers behind this body.

5. The tramway dispute was very important. There were two unions in the tramways, the Transport and Vehicle Workers Union and the Tramways Council of the MES. The former had 300 men and would not strike, and were essentially a 'protestant' union formed with the aid of the Carters. The MEA had 1500 men, ibid June 21 1919; and the cause of the original dispute, the destination of the funds of the previous benefit society to which the men belonged, was still a live issue.

6. Ibid , June 30 1919. The men were striking because they wanted to be designated as Transport Workers, rather than Maritime Seamen, and higher rates of pay, ibid July 22; they came out on official strike for the 44 hour week as well as dock labourers.

been shot and also were charged with:

> "riotously and tumultously assembled together to the terror of his Majesty's subjects." [1]

It was a ridiculous charge. On Wednesday evening a blackman had been stabbed and on Thursday evening a group of blacks had waited for a group of Scandinavians. Incidents like this had happened in 1917 and in 1918 and hadn't led to a riot, but this time when the police raided the negroes' boarding house and one ran away a mob of 2-300 gave chase:

> "A negro named Charles Wooton ran away, and followed by an angry crowd, who wrested him from the police, jumped into the dock and was drowned."[2]

The Liverpool Daily Post blamed the incident on the 'familiarity which exists between many of the coloured men and the white girls', stating that there were 4-5,000 blacks living in the South-End of the city a number which had 'greatly increased during the war' and added:

> "Quite recently the Discharged Soldiers and Sailors' organiser appealed to the Lord Mayor for repatriation so that they could have the jobs."[3]

In the next three days the attacks on the blacks at the South-End, the stoning and looting, led to 700 being taken into protective custody

1. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, June 7 1919.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid. The Lord Mayor claimed he had already been in touch with the Colonial Office.

by the police in the Bridewells and,

> "The friction which has arisen has extended to some of the big factories in the city in which black men have been employed for years.. One large manufacturing firm have discharged their black employees, as the white men refused to work with them."[1]

Moreover when the blacks appealed to the police for protection it was often they who were arrested.[2]

One of the leaders of the 'old' black community in Liverpool, Mr D. T. Aleifasakure Toummanah, Secretary of Ethiopia Hall called in on the Liverpool Post to refute their statements as well as the general misconceptions. . Firstly there were not thousands living in Pitt Street area but only hundreds (in all the city there might be 3-4000 blacks registered, although not all were still there); secondly, that they had served in the Army, the Navy and the transport services during the war but

> "The negro has been taunted by every boy, girl, man woman in the streets."[3]

and had been told by the Ministry of Reconstruction that they would be treated like other British loyal subjects. He had also already discussed repatriation with the Lord Mayor as many of the seamen were now completely unable to find work as seafarers and had to pawn their clothes to buy food:[4]

1. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, June 12 1919.

2. Ibid , One was charged with concealing a loaded revolver on his way to the policestation as he escaped from a mob. One white woman married to a black man was charged with creating a disturbance for shouting "a black man was ... as good as a white man."

3. Ibid , June 11 1919.

4. Ibid.

> "Our goods and our houses have been broken and taken away from us.
>
> Some of us have been wounded and lost limbs and eyes fighting for theEmpire to which we have the honour to belong. At present between forty and fifty three coloured men report themselves daily for repatriation.
>
> During the war, when the Mauretania was due to sail, the white crew failed to put in an appearance. She was manned by 'niggers'. We ask for British justice, to be treated as true and loyal sons of Great Britain."[1]

The worst destruction of housing occured in Stanhope Street and Russell Street.[2]

After the worst wave of riots the black population trickled back into their homes.[3] But what the riot had demonstrated was the disorientation of many Protestant workers. In July despite the Government suppression of Sinn Fein in different parts of Ireland the Orangemen's walk was only 2-3000 strong. 20,000 marched in Belfast and Carson threatened to call out the Ulster Volunteers again but this made no impression in Liverpool.[4]

The Catholic workers weren't as disorientated as their leaders. In December 1918, the return of Sinn Fein candidates throughout Ireland led to a situation where T. P. O'Connor was one of only six UIL candidates representing the whole of Ireland at Westminster (the Sinn Fein MPs did not sit). On October 28 1918, the special UIL conference in Manchester had decided not to join the Labour Party, and the December election results left them rudderless.[5]

1. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, June 11 1919.
2. Ibid , June 12 1919.
3. Ibid , June 13 1919.
4. Ibid , June 14 1919.
5. Ibid , Ocotber 28 1918.

T. P. O'Connor founded the 'Irish Fellowship Club' in an attempt to create an organisation like the Knights of Columbus in America,[1] and the Bishop Whiteside gave a speech on the labour movement and social reform. He argued for a living wage, security against unemployment, and a larger control in the management of industry, but also reminded 'the worker' that he had to give a fair day's work for a fair day's wage and before he could 'in the sight of God, strike' he ought to have peaceful negotiations.[2]

In August, when the police were on strike it was in the North-End of Liverpool that three days of looting took place. The story of the Police strike has been told elsewhere. Essentially, the pay and conditions of police officers had lagged behind all other workers during the War and they had been too few in numbers to undertake the policing of the city. After the pay rise in April 1915, they had no wage increase until December 1917, and even then the increase was extremely small.[3] In London, the newly formed National Police and Prison Officers Union struck in September 1918 and in the same month, the Liverpool branch of their union joined the Liverpool Trades Council.[4]

In 1919, the government decided to break up the Police Union. First, wages and conditions of work were increased to a greater

1. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, March 18 1919.

2. Ibid , April 12 1919.

3. Ibid , December 4 1919. In April 1915 a constable was paid from 35s to 46s a week and his increase in December 1917 was 5s to 6s a week. Sergeants were paid 49s to 56s and their increase was from 6s to 7s. Sub-Inspectors were paid £160 and their increase was £15, Inspectors were paid £180-£220 and their increase was £20.

4. Liverpool Trades Council Minutes, September 11 1918.

standard than those 'enjoyed' by other workers, and then in the Police Bill, a new Police Federation was proposed:

> "The new Federation must be entirely independent of, and must not associate with, any body or persons outside the police service, and no member can in any way be connected with a union which has as one of its objects the controlling or influencing of pay, pension or conditions of work in the force."[1]

The Police Union declared a strike on August 1 and London and Liverpool and Bootle police responded. In Liverpool, the Police Union claimed 7-800 were out, while the Head Constable claimed it was only 400. The men were given until 8pm on that first day to return to work and were then dismissed.[2]

The immediate result was large scale looting in Scotland Road on Friday night (1st) and the following Saturday night with the main targets being jewellery shops and clothes and boot shops. Troops attempted to clear the streets but as the crowd had calculated they wouldn't shoot they were unsuccessful. Eventually, uniformed police cleared it with batons. One man was shot in Vauxhall Road during the looting of a bottling warehouse at Victoria Dock. Eventually 368 adults and 45 juveniles were charged, more soldiers were brought in (there were over 3,000 eventually) and one super-dreadnought and two destroyers were stationed in the Mersey, and tanks were stationed in St George's Plateau.[3]

The Police Union lost their dispute in the first week. First, the stoppage was not total in either London or Liverpool and it was also difficult to spread it to other centres. Secondly,

1. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, August 2 1919.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid , August 4, 5 1919.

in Liverpool the City Council had had experience in both 1911, and in 1915 of organising their own strike breaking force and in 1919 they repeated this, calling up the 'Special Constables' (which is what the Liverpool Civic Service League had essentially become) and calling for more volunteers.[1] Thirdly, the Police Union was not supported by the other unions.

During the third reading of the Police Bill in the House of Commons, Sexton and Clynes had moved the Labour Party amendments which would have allowed the Police freedom to join a trade union - but when the strike started, Sexton expressed his regret at the attempt of strike action on the part of the police.[2]

The hopes that the police had for a General Strike in the port of Liverpool were encouraged by the attitude of the Railway Vigilance Committee in Liverpool and by the Liverpool Labour Party, but were illfounded.

A meeting in support of the Police Union was organised at the Stadium and at the meeting Councillor R. Watson of the NUR seconded by Fred Hoey moved:

> "This meeting of Liverpool Trade Unionists declares common cause with the National Police and Prison Officers Union and determines in order to give immediate and necessary assistance, that a 'down tool' policy be forwith declared. All trade unionists in the city and district are therefore urged to cease work at once owing to the attack made by the Government on trade unions."[3]

The Labour Party had also issued a manifesto stating that right

1. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, August 4 1919. Bank clerks were enrolled as Special Constables to defend the Banks. Magistrates enrolled Special Constables all day August 5, and kept the Cotton Exchange open in order to enrol the cotton trade

2. Ibid., August 2 1919.

3. Ibid August 4 1919.

was on the side of the men and if they were defeated then so would be the other unions.

> "This is not the police fight alone, it is our fight. We must stand together."[1]

In fact no one struck work in sympathy with the police. The tramway men struck work over their own dispute but were very clear that it was a separate dispute, and were almost immediately taken back in by Tevenan.[2]

Although Watson was the organiser of the largest Railway Vigilance Committee in the NUR, he had clearly spoken without authority. Even at the Stadium meeting he had said he had to return to the railwaymen to ask them to stop work, but the following day even the District Vigilance Committee of the NUR did not support his call, producing only

> "a resolution calling upon the National Executive to lend assistance to the Police Union. Failing a satisfactory reply to this appeal, the resolution stated that the Voluntary Committee would recommend a strike to defend the principles of trade unionism."[3]

This was the attitude, despite the fact that some ASLEF men had come out in sympathy in the London and South Western railway and on the London Tube.[4] When the Executive of the NUR refused

1. Liverpool Daily Post and Mail, August 4 1919.

2. Ibid , August 5 1919. The tramwaymen came out. The whole of the MEA was going to come out in support (i.e. the whole City Council) but Tevenan sent a telegram from London saying "Other departments must on no account come out. Tramways strike entirely unauthorised".

3. Ibid , August 4 1919.

4. Ibid.

to support the police strike because they were no longer the worst paid but now the 'aristocrats of labour', the meeting of the Liverpool branch of the NUR supported the Executive Committee.[1] Tom Mann, at the meeting said that the police action was just "but that no drastic action should be taken until the more pleasant methods of negotiations were exhausted." George Milligan said they would give moral support but they wouldn't call out the dockers:

> "It may be said that the dockers do not proclaim themselves either in favour of rioting or Bolshevism".[2]

All that the Liverpool Labour movement agreed to do on behalf of the police strike was to set up a Police Disputes Negotiating Secretariat, of which Walter Citrine was the Secretary, which attempted to negotiate with the Lord Mayors of Liverpool, Birkhenhead, Bootle and Wallasey.[3] When it became clear that the attempt to get reinstatement was hopeless[4] and that police strikers were being arrested continually for picketing[5], a meeting at the Picton Hall did call for a three day strike in order to get reinstatment. But this call was immediately disowned by the Executive Committee of the NUDL[6],

1. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, August 7 1919. See also Liv. T C Minutes where Flynn said he wanted to see the police reinstated but "Many NUR men were against any strike for the police ... He considered that the police had been used by persons who did not appear on the surface."

2. Ibid , August 7 1919.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid , August 8, 11, 13 1919.

5. Ibid , August 7, 8, 9 1919.

6. Ibid , August 18 1919.

and the strike was postponed 'until further notice.'[1]

In September, however, the railwaymen came out in dispute on their own account. On September 27, the headlines in the Liverpool Daily Post ran "Railwaymen to fight the State", "Strike at Midnight", "Troops to guard the lines", "Drastic Food Measures", "Mr Thomas in Tears". The issue was over whether the whole of the war wage should be put permanently on top of the pre-war wage. This had been done in the case of ASLEF (who had struck in September 1918 and come out with the London police) but not for the NUR. In Liverpool the strike was total and 10,000 workers were affected.[2]

Immediately, the Lord Mayor made a class for volunteers and began to run some trains out ofLime Street for London[3], and kept the Mersey Tunnel opened. Students attended classes in signalling,[4] and the Liverpool Trades Council later wrote to Liverpool University complaining at their 'blacklegging'.[5] During the strike the Trades Council heard Robert Watson describe ASLEF as solid and thanked the National Federation of Discharged Soldiers and Sailors for their attitude during the strike. He added that he was 'proud to be a railwayman.'[6]

1. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, August 20 1919.

2. Ibid., September 27 1919, September 29.

3. Ibid , September 30 1919. On the first train to Euston travelled three members of the Transport Workers Exectuive; Sexton A. Denaro of the MQRC, and Joseph Cotter of the Ship Stewards.

4. Ibid , October 4 1919.

5. Liverpool Trades Council, Minutes, October 1919, November 13. According to the Secretary, the blacklegging in the railway strike had mostly been done by 'demobilised officers many of whom were in receipt of £100-£175 per annum state grant, and also that indirect pressure had been brought to bear by members of the University staff in order to get students to do the work of railwaymen on strike.

6. Ibid , October 3 1919.

Although he hadbeen invited to put the case of the railwaymen from the pulpit of Toxteth Chapel, it was still clear from the list of schools he gave, where children had been intimidated, the South-End was still a blackspot.[1]

During the strike, the Liverpool Daily Post had wondered at the effect the strike would have on the forthcoming municipal elections. The effect was fairly clear. For the first time since 1911, Labour made massive gains - their gain of ten seats doubled their representation and equalled the number that sat on Glasgow city council. In this election the voters had again more than doubled,[2] and for the first time the Irish Nationalist votes went to Labour. Harford argued:

> "We stand by Labour because Labour stands by the freedom of small nationalities, the rights of minorities and the government of the people by the people".[3]

Despite Alderman Taggart appearing on a Liberal platform claiming that Catholics had no pact with 'socialists and atheists of the city"[4] it was clear that they had. T. P. O'Connor appeared on the platforms of Labour candidates and Taggart was disowned by the Irish Nationalists with the argument thatthe last two conferences of the UIL had settled the policy.[5]

1. Liverpool Trades Council, Minutes, October 8 1911.
2. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, October 24 1919.
3. Ibid , October 27 1919.
4. Ibid, October 29 1919.
5. Ibid, October 30 1919. In fact the last two conferences of the UIL had left its members a free hand. In Liverpool however the Liberals had not proposed an Irish Naionalist (i.e. Harford) as Lord Mayor and this was the cause of the dispute. In the election the Liberals only fought 6 out of 26 seats.

The results of the elections were that the Conservatives lost 9 seats, the Liberals lost 2, the Labour Party gained 10, and the Irish Nationalists gained 1. Thus, if the Conservatives had not had an overwhelming predominance of Alderman (26 Aldermen and 54 Councillors),the combined votes of the Liberals, Irish Nationalists and Labour councillors (9 Alderman and 55 Councillors) could have outvoted them.[1]

The 20 Labour Councillors looked as if they presaged a revolution in Liverpool politics. In fact this was not to be. The municipal elections of 1920 demonstrated that the 1919 election, one whose result was similar throughout England although not in Glasgow, was in Liverpool a freak result like 1911.

The municipal seats that went Labour were the Welsh and the railwaymen: Anfield, Breckfield, Edge Hill, Everton, Kensington, Low Hill, Old Swan, Wavertree West, West Derby and Garston.[2] Six seats were gained in Bootle for Labour, and 7 in Birkenhead.[3]

Clearly in Liverpool the dockland areas had not gone Labour. Nor, however,were they to respond in 1920 to the call of the Orange and the Green. In November 1919, Sinn Fein was suppressed throughout the whole of Ireland. Arthur Griffith commented:

> "The English Government in Ireland has now proclaimed the whole Irish nation as it formerly proclaimed the Catholic Church, an illegal assembly."4

1. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, November 3 1919. Although one 'independent' Councillor would have voted with them.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid , November 27 1919.

But, although The Times, ran a series of scare stories in November and December 1919 about Sinn Fein activity in Liverpool, the Chief Constable denied the claim - at that point.[1] As, however the struggle in Ireland intensified so the support for Sinn Fein in Liverpool appeared to intensify and several Liverpool men were arrested and interned.

The Irish prisoners went on hunger strike in Wormwood Scrubs against being interned without trial and the Liverpool branch of the Irish Self-Determination Society, P. J. Kelly who was president, said that the Liverpool docks would strike if the men were not released. Sexton argued of the whole 48,000 dockers in the union only 25,000 were Irishmen and half of the union were opposed to using the union machine on behalf of Sinn Fein. Kelly however, claimed he had spoken to other dock centres and they would come out.[2]

But on April 30, out of the 37,000 dockers in the Port of Liverpool alone only 1,000 struck. Although Kelly claimed it as a victory, claiming that it had closed down the coastal steamers, the Atlantic lines (through a coalheavers strike), three sheds in Birkenhead, and that Garston would also come out, it was clear that the strike had little support. On May 3, the Liverpool Daily Post could report that, apart from holding up the Irish Cross Channel boats the effects were nil.[3]

There was in effect a 'community' which would produce individual Sinn Fein members, but not one that could be mobilised collectively.

1. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, January 1 1919.
2. Ibid., April 29 1919.
3. Ibid., May 3 1920.

Similarly, despite the war in Ireland, the Orange call was not answered in 1920. In July 3,000 children and 3,000 adults celebrated the battle of the Boyne.[1] However, despite the collapse of Orangeism and of the Green in the post-war crisis it was not possible for Labour to fill the gap as the attempt to create a May Day movement demonstrated.

Encouraged by the success in the 1919 Municipal Elections, the Labour movement in Liverpool once again attempted to create a new base, a wider appeal among the Liverpool working class, and to operate as a leadership of the whole of the Liverpool working class on May Day 1920. In 1920, May Day fell on a Saturday, and with the new working hours, it only meant moving for a half day strike for the first of May.

The Federation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Trades and the ASE balloted their members for a one day strike, and the ballot was won 2:1, with 8,268 voting for and 4,147 voting against.[2] It was announced that the public utility services would not be called out but that other manual labour was expected to stop with the exception of the docks. The strike was not unanimous: some shipbuilding and engineering workers did strike - but didn't turn up to the demonstration.

Only 1,200 workers were in the procession, 2,000 in Sheil Park and they were then joined by a Sinn Fein demonstration of the striking dockers. Alderman Richardson spoke and protested at the internment of Liverpool men without trial, and Fred Hoey, in his speech said that the Government never intended to keep faith with

1. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, July 13 1920.
2. Ibid , April 30 1920.

Ireland. Three resolutions were passed - one sent fraternal greetings to the workers of all countries, the second demanded a 44 hour week and control of profiteering, and the third called for self-determination in Ireland, Egypt and India.

The speakers at the demonstration were from the Liverpool and Bootle Trades Councils, the ILP, the BSP, the Fabian Society, the Transport Workers Federation (Robinson) and the Co-operative Society.[1]

Essentially, with the crisis of 1919-1920, the small Liverpool Labour Party, especially the ILP section, was moving to the left. In August, following a successful "Hands off Russia Meeting"[2] the Trades Council heard a deputation from the Belfast Labour Party on the recent pogroms there:

> "A deputation had attended from the Belfast Labour Party consisting of Mr Hanna, Boilermakers Union, Mr McGrath Shipwrights and Mr Hart of the NUDL. The gentlemen stated the case for the victimised shipyard workers and showed how the rioting and consequent victimisation were part of a plot by theCarson faction to conquer by dividing the Belfast workers when they were uniting on a class basis under the Labour Banner. Horrible tales were told of the barbarities and indignities workers with labour ideas had had to suffer."[3]

Hoey then moved that a special meeting of the committee of every trade union branch in Liverpool be called as soon as possible to be addressed by the Belfast delegates.

1. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, May 3 1920.
2. Ibid , April 6 1920.
3. Ibid.

But the Liverpool Labour movement's ability to intervene in and restructure Liverpool politics, was as limited as it had always been. Despite the decline of the Orange Order, the Conservative Party was able to win the 1920 municipal elections on a straight appeal to patriotism. In 1919 the railwaymen's strike had posed the reality of class politics.[1] But in 1920 there was no similar strike and the Conservative Party joined with the Liberal Party in an election campaign

> "in defence of Constitutional Practice and the protection of legitimate individual rights against socialistic raids and experiments."[2]

The Labour candidates were defeated in every one of the 21 seats they contested in Liverpool and they lost Everton and Garston. The Nationalists took four Liberal seats in Exchange, Great George, Sandhills and St. Anne's. Only in Bootle did Labour win anything. Salvidge was able to declare that it was not a party victory but a victory of "Loyal and patriotic citizens of all parties".[3]

Thus whereas in Glasgow the 1919-1920 crisis led to the ILP and Labour movement winning 44 municipal seats and becoming the 'natural' representatives of the Glasgow working class, in Liverpool the situation remained that of 1911-1912. The Conservative caucus in Liverpool could proclaim after 1920 that the municipal battle had not been a battle of class against class.[4] Politics had been repolarised along national lines. At the end of November 1920 the largest Sinn Fein raid to take place in Britain during

1. It would be worth exploring how far the success of the railwaymen's propaganda campaign was important to the 1919 municipal elections in England and Wales.
2. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, November 1 1920. The Liberal Party had already been restructured: in July a Merseyside Council of Liberals had been formed to prevent the "annihilation of Liberalism as an active force in public life", see ibid, July 14 1920; September 20 1920, Richard Holt took over as the new Liberal leader.
3. Ibid, November 2 1920.
4. Ibid.

the Irish War of Independence took place in Liverpool. The Liverpool and Bootle docks were set on fire and 16 warehouses and two timber yards were destroyed[1]. At the end of December six men and two women were charged with causing one million pounds worth of damage and with shooting at a policeman (one youth had been shot dead).[2]

At the end of 1920 all the questions of Liverpool politics were still outstanding. But they were unresolved in a context in which the organisations which had maintained the commonsense of Liverpool had been destroyed. The Conservative Working Men's Association had not only shrunk in size but now operated within an electorate that had trebled in size in 1918; the Protestant Reformers' Memorial Church was in crisis; the Irish Nationalist movement in Liverpool was totally isolated. The question which now posed itself was how long could such commonsense survive without an organisational base and in a society which was totally transformed? The answer - a suprisingly long time.

1. Ibid, November 29 1920.
2. Ibid, December 30 1920.

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